

A N T I P A T H Y.

VOL. III.

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ANTIPATHY,

OR

THE CONFESSIONS OF A CAT-HATER.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

"Pray Sir do you know what are some men's antipathies?"

— "Yes, cats, rats, old maids, double tripe, spiders,
Cheshire cheese, and cork-cutters."

The Poor Gentleman.

LONDON :

JOHN MACRONE, SAINT JAMES'S SQUARE.

MDCCCXXXVI.



A N T I P A T H Y.

C H A P T E R I.

“ Nay, thou wilt starve sure ;—
There’s nothing to be got now-a-days
Unless thou canst fish for it.”

Pericles.

THERE are no objects which at first strike more forcibly the inexperienced with wonder than the rolling ocean or a populous and extensive city : we are awed and surprised by the boundlessness of the one, nor are lesser feelings of admiration excited by the other. Its pomp, bustle, tide of life continually circulating on a thousand vain pursuits, together with the gigantic undertakings on all sides perfecting or

perfected, are legible types of that rational superiority which stamps man steward of the works of God.

All these invariably seize upon my mind on entering London, and plunge it into a train of solemn reflection which no other object can produce.

On entering London, and considering that all the wealth, power and glory before me has been achieved by my countrymen—that the most hidden corners of the earth have been ransacked by them—and that everything precious or useful was here concentrated, I could not refrain from feeling a degree of pride, and was apt, for the moment, to assign our race a higher rank in the scale of intellect than I had before esteemed myself worthy of aspiring to.

A crowded thoroughfare is, however, the worst place in the world for a moralist to take up a position; and, during the ten minutes spent by us in parting with our fellow-travellers, we were so jostled by sweeps, fishwomen, Jews, and Christians, that heartily glad were we to extricate ourselves from the throng. However indisposed I may be to say any thing which might be construed into any person's

disadvantage, I must confess that eight out of these ten minutes were taken up by Foster's farewell to Cleopatra, who, it appeared, was immediately to set out with her husband for the north of Yorkshire. As for honest Mere Groby, he gave us his address in Westminster, where he informed us he kept a draper's shop, and would be obliged by our custom.

All this being settled, we set off for lodgings which Foster had formerly occupied, and where he had repeatedly assured me I would find every comfort, combined with economy. Nor was this all, for, according to his account, the landlady was a prodigy of kindness and attention, and had she been, indeed, a phoenix, he could not have extolled more highly her singular good qualities. These lodgings were not very far from Red Lion Square, and though homely enough, as it may be supposed from the slender state of our finances, I was pleased to find my friend's praises of the landlady corroborated by the cleanliness of her establishment, and the alacrity with which she set about getting us some dinner. I could also clearly see that Foster stood high in her good graces, for she

was quite in raptures at his appearance, and betrayed such strong emotions of delight, that I at one time thought she would have caught him in her arms. That this would have afforded but little satisfaction to my friend, the following sketch of her person will, I think, fully substantiate :—

Mrs. Martha Diggens, proprietor of this house, was a buxom widow, bordering on forty, a thorough Londoner, and one whose furtherest wanderings had been confined to a Sunday evening's drive to Greenwich Park, or an occasional stroll to Kensington Gardens. Once, indeed, she had travelled, with her husband, as far as Ramsgate, for the purpose of spending their honey-moon ; and this, the most important era of her life, was the Hegira by which her chronology was generally regulated.

Mrs. Diggens was somewhat short in stature ; a defect nature had compensated for by her liberality in figure, and an extraordinary strength of arm ; such an allowance of muscle was she, indeed, gifted with that she could, with ease, on washing days, lift a tub of water which two less powerful Amazons could barely move :—a

feat which this “Queen of Feminie” prided herself more upon than Hercules did in thrashing the Nemean lion.

I cannot forbear mentioning a description of Mrs. Diggens, although she is very slightly connected with my personal history; for the first question I asked her, was, whether she kept a cat? to which she, having answered in the negative, it is not to be supposed we were likely to come into any disagreeable collision with one another.

The contour of her face was not what an artist would have termed Roman, Grecian, Chaldean, nor Egyptian, for it belonged rather to the fiddle class; that is to say, it was long, resembling much the map of South America, of which her double chin was the Terra del Fuego; and her wrinkles the numerous rivers by which that beauteous continent is watered.

This face, although its owner enjoyed robust health, was discoloured by a kind of demi-jaundice, which, in some particular spots, assumed a mottled appearance, similar to those lights of bronze with which likeness takers relieve their silhouettes; and her arms, which

were usually bare, had precisely the same uncommon diversity of colouring.

This peculiarity of complexion had once subjected her to a most mortifying sarcasm which she never could forget, to her dying day; for having once tormented a portrait painter, of lowly manners, but rising reputation, about the expenses of having her kit-cat drawn, he, losing at length all patience, replied, looking her full in the face,

“ Bless me, madam, I cannot possibly say, for yellow ochre is at present very dear.”

Martha Diggens never recovered this scandalous insult; and ever afterwards had a mortal antipathy to every thing yellow.

Martha’s nose was a majestic prominence, which had, nevertheless, a condescension for its lowly relative, the chin; and a dash of cerulean less changing than that of the curs of Scylla, together with a rotatory motion, which habit or the *chorea sancti Viti* had conferred upon it were its peculiar characteristics. This, during the greater part of her life-time was a perpetual motion, whirling about in all directions, so that it seemed, to a fanciful view, the

horn of an immense inquisitive mail, or the gnomon of a dial, which had suddenly started into being.

As the mouth is, in my opinion, the most expressive feature, and consequently the most difficult to paint or model, I may be pardoned if unable to find for it a fitting simile. To my eyes, this organ, when shut, bore a strong resemblance, in shape, to a common cow's horn, seen sideways; but when open, its configuration, which was the counterpart of a miller or corn-dealer's wooden shovel, could not fail to strike the most torpid imagination.

This curious mouth was studded with a few solitary stumps, in form and colour very similar to such half-decayed roots as the curious may observe at the bottom of a pond when nought but thin and oozy slime remain. Nor was slime wanting to make perfect this uncommon figure of speech, for Mrs. Diggens attributed, the preservation of these stumps entirely to tobacco, of which she made constant use, and never lost any opportunity of extolling and recommending its many efficacies.

But why do I thus dally at my pallet when

the less finished the picture the more acceptable perhaps will it prove. In short, then, if the reader can sum up these foregoing items in his imagination, with the addition of a large starched cap, a neat kerchief thrown over her brawny parchment neck with a red check gown swaddling her enormous person, he will then have an excellent idea of our worthy and attentive landlady.

Our dinner, which was an early one, being dispatched, Foster commenced unpacking, very expeditiously, his portmanteau, which, with mine, had reached its destination considerably before ourselves; and on my asking his reason, he answered with great coolness, that he was about to don his Sunday's best, and make an immediate experiment with that valuable letter on which he had every right to build such high expectations. This I thought a prudent enough step, and wishing him every success, I set about disposing of my scanty worldly effects in my new apartment, with a heart far less light than that of my volatile companion.

No sooner was he gone than I was attacked

by Mrs. Diggens, whose curiosity certainly equalled that of any of her sex. After skilfully opening her battery by enquiring if I found my room comfortable, and was “sure—quite sure, there was nothing that I wanted?” she ran into a lengthened eulogy on Foster whom she designated, at least twenty times, the best and handsomest young man she had ever seen. From this she, with admirable tact, managed to shift into a string of the most brazen-faced interrogatories :

“ She was certain the moment she saw me that we were relations,—second cousins at the furthest.—No!—quite astonished at that—could have sworn we were cousins.”

Then she would venture half-a-crown that I came to town for the purpose of studying the law?—No!—well, there were other professions in the world than the law, thank heaven, and much more respectable too. I was not a whit too young to intend practising as a surgeon.

I informed her that I knew nothing at all of surgery.

“ It was all the better for me—O it was a terrible butcher-like business, that dissecting

christian's flesh—far better to do it where there is some cause to warm one's blood—as a soldier or sailor ; for one of which she was sure so fine a looking young man must be intended.”

To these and some other such fishing questions, Martha received purposely from me the same unsatisfactory replies, and at last nettled as she was, and infinitely perplexed what to make of me, she to my great relief left me to solitude and my own reflections.

These were of a gloomy enough nature, for I felt utterly at a loss what to do, and a hundred unavailing regrets passed through my mind for having so unadvisedly given up my appointment in the Indian service. When we are completely mystified, any advice is valuable, whether or no one abides by it ; and on this occasion I actually sat down and wrote a long letter to old Jasper Harrison, requesting his opinion as to what course I ought to pursue.

I afterwards repented of having done this, as it mortified not a little my vanity, but it was the impulse of a moment of perplexity, and could not be remedied. The only deter-

mination which I can say I came to, was to devote a month in seeking some employment, when if disappointed, I resolved on embarking in the very first ship for the American Provinces, and bidding an eternal adieu to a friendless country, on which I only lay an idle and unprofitable burden.

How many translantic heroes and great men have been forced to flee their country from circumstances precisely similar, and afterwards found reasons to bless the unhappiness of their early fortunes. I had just despatched my letter, when I heard Foster mounting the stairs at a slower pace than was usual to him, whilst he whistled a cheerful tune in a manner exceedingly sedative.

“Well, Foster, what fortune?” asked I.

“Pho! much the same as the little pedlar’s who taught me my philosophy.”

“The little pedlar, who was he! I never before heard of him; and what was his fortune?”

“I thought I had told you all about him; but, however, his luck was generally a civil refusal.”

"I am sorry for your disappointment," replied I, "but how learnt you philosophy from a pedlar?"

"You shall hear;" continued my friend. "I was one sultry afternoon looking out of that very window, when I perceived a jaded looking young man carrying a small hawker's box, who called at every door in the street without finding a single customer. Astonished at the pertinacity with which he nevertheless continued his solicitations, I had the idleness, or curiosity to put on my hat and follow at some little distance, when he actually called at every house in that other long street, without disposing of any of his merchandise. 'Bless me!' thought I, on seeing that despite of all this encouragement he continued his calls with unflagging assiduity, 'what a miracle of patience must this wretch be!' I now stepped up to him, and enquired what he was selling, and although it happened to be tapes, cotton, and small wares, (articles which I never before bought in my life,) I was induced to spend sixpence for the sake of bringing him into conversation.

“‘I have watched you,’ said I, ‘offer your goods to at least one hundred persons, not one of whom has been a purchaser; now may I ask how many applications you may make on an average before you dispose of a penny-worth of stuff?’

“‘Why, Sir,’ said the pedlar, ‘you ask a strange question; but to give a guess I should think that I make about a hundred calls before I sell a bobbin.’

“‘Of which,’ I observed, ‘you get one half clear profit?’

“‘You are a very curious gentleman,’ continued he; ‘but I don’t think you are very far from the mark neither.’

“‘Well then, Mr. Pedlar,’ replied I after a short pause, ‘you must make seven thousand two hundred calls, before you can earn three shillings, supposing that you realise a halfpenny of profit on each bargain, and sell no more than one pennyworth at a time—’

“‘I am but a poor calculator,’ rejoined the pedlar, ‘and it may be as your honour says; but how can that interest a gentleman like you?’

“‘Why,’ said I, ‘it has taught me a mar-

vellous good moral, never to despair ; or to conclude, that because one meets with ninety-nine crosses, there is no chance of a blessing being in store.'

" 'I am glad to hear that you have been so much benefitted,' said he of the pack ; 'and if you will condescend to look over some of my pins, bodkins, and patent eyed needles, you will I am certain lay out a little more of your money.'

" Here he set about undoing his bundle in a great hurry, but wishing him good day, I abruptly took my leave. Now, Butler, that was the way I picked up the most valuable portion of my philosophy ; and don't you think the sixpence was exceedingly well bestowed ?"

" Your present indifference sufficiently proves that," replied I ; " for I imagine you have received but a cool reception from the gentleman you have just waited on ?"

" It was just such a reception as I like Butler, for the mortification attending it was honied, at least by honesty ; there was no humbug, none of those high professions of which falsehood is ever the father ; and which

cause a poor devil to hang on in sickening expectancy. Mr. Beaumont plainly told me, that he would not deceive me by promising what he might never have in his power to fulfil, and advised me not to place any dependence on his well wishes or assistance. Now I would a thousand times sooner have this, than one of your fine flowery speeches which butter no parsnips ; for a man then knows that he has to put about, ship, try another tack, and no more about it.”

“ Well, and what is your next scheme ?”

“ To muster sufficient brass, and face my old patron, the Bibliopolist ; I know him to be at least a worthy man, and on my apologising for my rudeness to him, I believe he will do something for me.”

This resolution Foster put into effect next morning, and had the satisfaction to find himself re-instated in his old drudgery, after receiving, as he told me, a good half hour’s admonition from his employer. I was not much surprised at my friend’s success, for I knew that all his errors were very venial, and likely to be looked over by any one he might have

angered or injured, upon his expressing contrition for them and promising amendment.

The time which I had allotted myself for obtaining some honest employment, was meanwhile slipping fast away, and, although I managed to amuse myself, and at the same time assist Foster by pursuing some of the numerous manuscripts which were sent for his critical opinion, I gradually sunk deeper into the slough of despond, as those valuable days became numbered. My companion also seemed to have grown more thoughtful, so much so, that I began to think I had misjudged his real disposition: but of this I was quite relieved by seeing him one morning enter my room, more like a madcap or mountebank than a grave censor of the press, whilst cutting sundry difficult capers he thus broke forth—

“ Hurra ! England for ever ! America be swamped ! what the deuce say I, is there in your composition, which could suggest to you the committing of the cruel crime of Yankeeism, or how could your proud spirit ever amalgamate itself with such a galley-slave race ? Believe me, my friend, there is no scalping,

no tomahawking, no gouging in store for you—you shall never learn the war-hoop, smoke the calumet, bark squirrels, pull opossums by the tail, nor yet drive your own team of niggars. No, my dear Butler, I have at last done your business, and obtained for you, a snug and respectable appointment, though the emolument is at present somewhat less than I could desire.”

“Indeed,” said I very much surprised, “pray what is it?”

“A birth in the police office?

“A what?” asked I suspecting that he was tipsy.

“Do not be frightened, for there is no limbo in the case; nor yet are you to be a magistrate, nor yet a clerk, nor yet a constable, but still shall you have an eternal seat in that place where so many are obliged to stand. What do you think of being reporter for the——? nothing to do but to sit there attentive to the interesting proceedings, take notes and afterwards dress them out with all the attic salt in your noddle for the edification of the public.”

“ A reporter! why my dear fellow 'tis a duty I am not capable of undertaking; for I am profoundly ignorant of short hand and every other kind of hand but my own indifferent fist; however, since you say that you have got me the situation I will do my best to make myself master of that art and do all the credit in my power to your kindness.”

“ Nay I must not assume to myself all the credit, for another friend of yours was in a great measure the means of obtaining the appointment.”

“ Who can he be—certainly not my uncle?”

“ No.”

“ Nor yet old Jasper the butler?”

“ No.”

“ Nor yet Mr. Beaumont?”

“ No.”

“ I confess then,” said I, “ it were needless for me to guess any further, for I can remember no one likely to do me such a good turn.”

“ Well I will no longer tantalize you, what think you of the patronage of our friend, Mere Groby?”

“ The quaker! impossible, why he knows nothing at all about me.”

“ That matters little ; he has done the thing as effectually as if you had been his own son, as you shall shortly hear. You must know then that I happened to pass his shop this morning, and could not resist entering to see my unfortunate bedfellow, who received me very kindly though sedately. Our conversation soon turned upon our own affairs, and when I informed him of the business in which I had just been reinstated, he turned up his eyes, and expressed a strong anxiety for my salvation, declaring it to be impossible for any one so to cram and surfeit himself with folly and vanity as I needs must do, without rubbing himself as it were against the very whiskers of the arch destroyer. He then enquired after you, and what you were engaged in, when I told him your true situation, saying that you were waiting on Dame Fortune till the old housewife should throw something in your way—”

“ ‘ My good friend,’ responded Groby, ‘ rather make ye fortune wait upon yourselves.

Idleness is even worse than any particular sin mentioned in holy writ—for it is the mother of every enormity—resist then her snares, which are silky, and soft, and pleasant, when first thrown over the shoulders; but closer and closer doth she draw them together until escape is impracticable. Good resolution profiteth nothing, and I have read in some profane author that Hell itself is paved with good intentions. When I say profane I mean it is not in the Bible. But, my son, attend to the offer which I am about to propose and pray for grace to enable you to open the eyes of your friend to what may prove of good account. He is young, active and I believe virtuous—my business now requires more hands than mine and Emanuel's, and if he will become my apprentice he will find no very heavy duties to perform, nor no hard task master to enforce them; but in the end perhaps profit in the things of this world as well as advancement to those of the next. What I would require is, that he attends daily from six in the morning till eight in the evening: one hour allowed for breakfast, and another

for dinner; a room, bed, and washing, I would provide for him with a wage of two shillings a day for which he should board himself.'

" Such, as near as I can remember was Groby's speech, to which I made a grateful reply on your behalf, but, assured him that your wishes lay in a very different channel, and like my own inclined towards some literary engagement; that unfortunately, however, you had no friends to forward your views, and were resolved to banish yourself for ever from the country rather than remain unemployed. Groby having expressed himself sorry for your plight, and after some consideration, remembered that he had a very old customer and neighbour who was connected some way or other with the——newspaper; he accordingly sat down and wrote a note to Mr. Jackson (such was the gentleman's name) which after taking a kind leave of Groby I immediately conveyed to him with my own hands. This Mr. Jackson proved to be one of the editors of the paper, and a more gentlemanlike person I never before met. He first of all passed a

eulogy on his old and honest acquaintance Broad brim ; he then put many questions to me respecting you, all of which I answered in a manner very satisfactory. He then informed me that he had just found reason to discharge one of their sub reporters who had chiefly been employed in the police offices at a probationary salary of a guinea a week, and that if you were capable of the situation it was, from Groby's recommendation, fairly at your service.

“ So now, my friend, let America go to the mischief and to-morrow you must wait upon Mr. Jackson, to thank him for his goodness, and receive your instructions.”

This I accordingly did, and by unremitting attention to my duty and acquiring from study a facility in taking notes, I soon became a very respectable reporter and might perchance have risen in time to a higher rank in the establishment, had not fortune determined that I was to resemble that rolling stone which the proverb affirms gathereth no moss.

ANTIPATHY.

C H A P T E R II.

“ What are you chafed ?
Ask God for temperance, that’s the appliance only
Which your disease requires.”

Henry VIII.

BEFORE recounting the reason of my resigning the reportership, I cannot forbear mentioning how Foster and myself lost irrecoverably the good opinion of the kind hearted Mere Groby.

It must be known, then, that after having sat regularly above a month at Bow Street and other offices, Foster proposed to me the propriety of giving my benefactor a dinner as a mark of our gratitude.

To this I cordially assented ; but with an

amendment, which was, that as we had lately been talking a great deal about white-bait we should repair to Greenwich, have a feast upon that delicacy, and make the day a regular holiday. Foster acquiesced in my proposal, but it was a very difficult thing to get Groby to do so; for, excepting the journey he had made when we met him, he had not been out of Westminster for many years; and, but that Foster happened to enquire whether or not he had any correspondents in Deptford or Greenwich, which Groby remembered he had, and very bad payers, we should never have prevailed upon him to dine with us. At length he was persuaded, and having engaged a wherry for the day, we set out, stopping for some hours at Deptford in order to enable the quaker to act the dun to his unsuspecting debtors, whilst we examined the Dock-yard and shipping.

Groby was fortunate in his applications for payment, which may perhaps be attributed to the surprise which his personal appearance caused in the minds of his debtors; and his spirits rose in proportion as we dropped down to Greenwich.

The first thing we did after arriving there was

to order a white-bait dinner;—our second to inspect the hospital, which is, unquestionably, the finest modern building in England; and, next, to stroll through its interesting park, which commands, from some of its eminences, the most interesting and animated panorama in the world. Indeed, I know of no other spot where a reflective man can seat himself so profitably as the One-tree-hill of Greenwich. It is so called from its being, with difficulty, able to afford a sufficiency of nourishment to the only piece of timber which perhaps ever flourished on such a flinty situation; and rises gently above that well wooded portion of the park which intervenes betwixt it and the hospital. Around this tree, which seems at co-ventry with all its fellows, the King Ranger or some one else, has done a much more judicious thing than he is perhaps aware of, in erecting a strong seat, and nothing but a seat, though many knives and pen-knives have now rendered it one confused hieroglyphic ring.

Sit thee down then, as we did, with thy back to the rough rind of that tree, and as thine eye roams delighted and surprised over the

misty metropolis and its ship-choked thoroughfare, it is ten to one, if the day be serene and clear, that the scene may throw a salve upon thy soul which may never before have fallen there.

When we had satisfied ourselves with this view, which even the phlegmatic quaker pronounced wonderful, we repaired to our inn, and found an excellent dinner waiting us, to which we did ample justice, having appetites more like wolves than christians.

Our thirst was quenched by copious draughts of mighty ale; and as our means did not admit of ordering more than one bottle of wine, after that was discussed, we set seriously to the compounding of hot brandy punch. Groby like many tight-laced saints, though as moderate and temperate a man as ever lived, was easily persuaded into an excess, when once you had got him to infringe, in the slightest degree, his usual rules; and, on the present occasion, being much pressed by Foster, he swallowed, consecutively, such a number of stiff reeking tumblers as convinced me that he must either become utterly drunk or else be blessed with

an invincible head-piece. The former suspicion was the better founded. At length, much to Foster's vexation, who wished to see Groby fairly floored, I interfered by calling and settling the bill.

It was now time for us to be on our way home; but Foster, always up to mischief, perceiving a bill of the play, proposed to adjourn there. To this the quaker doggedly refused to assent, though without giving any reason, and I, at first, was equally averse. Foster, however, entreated me so earnestly not to oppose his persuading Groby to enter, for once, a theatre, that at length I reluctantly promised to act a neutral part, and to be guided entirely by his decision. By dint of great coaxing, and assuring him that it would cost nothing, nor yet offend in any way his conscience, Foster, to my surprise, gained his consent, and accordingly the three of us set forth, arm-in-arm, our paths diverging sometimes like spokes from the centre of a wheel, of which Groby might be regarded as the nave.

"Verily," exclaimed Groby, shoving his broad shoulders with some difficulty into that

very small theatre, “ verily have I sojourned so long ; yea, one score years and ten in the unclean Babylon, and withstood all her sorceries, even until now, when the evil one hath foiled me. But I will retrace my steps before they lead me further into this pit of abomination and eternal wrath.”

Unluckily, however, for Groby, he was too far gone in other respects than into the “ pit of abomination,” to be able to discover the door by which he had entered, and having never before visited a theatre in his life, he was perfectly puzzled to conceive how he had got in.

Foster now endeavoured to divert his attention by pointing out to him the orchestra, boxes, gallery, all of which were new and wonderful to him, and appeared, though poor and pitiful in the extreme, as gorgeous a palace as enchantment ever fabricated.

“ Verily,” exclaimed Groby, “ this is a mighty tabernacle—a golden house like unto the temple of Solomon, or the palace of Nero ; yea, and those womenkind in the first row are wondrous fair to look upon, and doubtlessly subtle load-stones, to attract the frailties of the

flesh. Yea, and peradventure these harps, sackbuts, psalteries, and dulcimers are as sweet as those that sounded before the heathen king, to whose graven image Daniel refused to bow.

By this he of course alluded to the orchestra, which had just struck up the national anthem in rather a superior manner, considering its strength. Immediately every head (in the pit, at least,) was uncovered, saving Groby's, for he, deaf to all entreaties on my part, and still regardless of the sneers and whispers of the pit, or the howling and orange peel of the gods above, stood there, colossus-like, beneath his wide expanse of brim. Firm and dignified beneath his hat, as Jonah under his gourd, stood the inflexible quaker. All our efforts to get him down into his seat, after the orchestra had finished, were for some time ineffectual, though Foster tugged his spacious coat tails to the risk of rending the good broad cloth ; and just as we managed to do so, a half-sucked orange descended with vast velocity from the regions of the *Dii minorum gentium*, and struck him in the right eye, jaundicing his whole physiognomy.

Groby, from the state he was in, interpreted

this into a civility, and turning his besmeared face towards the spheres, made a respectful bow, amidst peals of laughter; but an empty beer bottle, which immediately followed, and, grazed his beaver, causing afterwards considerable detriment to a lady's leghorn, who sat before him, threw the whole pit into indescribable terror and confusion.

There can be no doubt that this dangerous missile was intended for the benefit of my friend, though he himself was far from suspecting any malicious intention.

The disturbance consequent on such proceedings being ended, Groby, though seated, still inflexibly put on his hat, and consequently excluded the three next behind him from having more than a partial peep at the performance, whilst to all remonstrances, and even bland solicitations, that he would uncover, he only answered, "Friend, it suiteth me not;" and with this explanation the miserable trio were obliged to rest satisfied.

The performance was Othello, and the four first acts passed off very well, except when Groby, who fell fast asleep, happened to disturb

some still pathos, or that by-play which adds so much to histrionic effect, by one of his deepest grunts. By kicking his shins, I managed to awake him, just as the fifth act commenced ; when, gaping and staring, he seemed surprised at finding himself in such a situation.

Being now fully aroused, he attended very closely to the performance ; but not Roscius, nor a whole company of his peers, could have elicited from him one clap or smile of approbation. At last, the little black fiend entered to destroy his wife ; and when awakened by his murderous hands, the half-dreaming, halfbelieving Desdemona exclaims :

“ Kill me to-morrow ; let me live to-night.” The quaker pricked up his ears from apprehension of the perpetration of so horrible a deed ; but on hearing poor Brabantio’s daughter beg earnestly for a reprieve—

“ — But while I say one prayer.”

He could no longer stand it.—

“ Unrighteous son of heathenism,” cried the quaker, in a voice much more sonorous than that of the Moor, “ stay thy guilty hand ! what wilt thou attempt—the life of that innocent

woman—before the eyes of so many collected together?"

As may be supposed, the whole house, which was none of the most genteel, was quite electrified at this exhortation. A dead silence ensued, but Othello, regardless of the interruption and pause, went on with his butcherous part. Groby, perceiving this, uttered not another word; but, rendered considerably more energetic, if not vigorous, by his previous potations, he made one step over the low railing of the pit for the purpose of rescuing Desdemona.

Not more fraught with ruin is the visit of a bear to the delicate fabric of a bee-hive—nor more furious the assault made upon him by its inmates, than was the unlooked for descent of Groby into the orchestra. His massive feet first lighted on the inverted large drum, through which they, in a twinkling, disappeared, and being thus confined, he of a sudden lost his balance and fell, crushing into a melancholy miscellany of chips, the principal violincello of the band. In a moment all was riot and uproar: the gods above shrieked, howled, and catcalled;

—the boxes and pit were convulsed with laughter, and the orchestra was more full of fury than a cock pit. Groby being prostrate on the broad of his back, two fiddlers of pre-eminence, thinking it a glorious opportunity to secure the invader, rushed simultaneously upon him: little, however, were they aware of the muscle of their enemy, for at one spring the son of Brim regained his legs, kicking right and left the remnants of the drum and fiddle, and with astonishing tact pitched, at the same time, upon an unhappy German with a highly powdered wig, who chanced to be the proprietor of the violincello. This man being much exasperated at the fate of his instrument, had ventured some vicious kicks at Groby's carcass, one of which took severe effect: and then it was that the quicksilver of the quaker's wrath rose to fever heat, and grasping the skinny-faced German by the wig, which quitted his pate, he bestowed a terrible buffet on his short ribs, and then finished fully his business by dusting and blinding him with his own hair powder.

There is no stimulant equal to success; a man blessed with it goes like a machine devoid

of friction ; and thus was it with the quaker, who now laid about him with the wig with threefold and most impartial fervour, diffusing on every side, clouds of flour. But finding that though this weapon checked, it did not intimidate the enemy, he, with astonishing self-possession, snatched up a trombone of great length, and some one dealing him another surreptitious kick behind, he put forth the whole might of his back bone, and forthwith levelled a hautboy player and the tambourine at the first flourish of his instrument.

All formidable opposition being to a certain extent now neutralised, he advanced along the orchestra with huge strides, demolishing every thing in his route.

“ Philistines ! followers of the fallen dragon,” exclaimed he, destroying as he spoke, a veritable cremona and overturning the kettle drum ; “ ye scurvy and villainous coadjutors of murder and barbarity, may the Lord (knocking down a pursy flute player, whose obesity prevented his escape,) turn away from me, if I repay not you all according to your works.”

Nothing mortal, nothing musical could with-

stand the fury of Groby's trombone ; not more effectual were the horns of the elders in demolishing the fortifications of Jericho, than was the quaker's instrument in dispersing the luckless votaries of Polyhymnia. Havock and destruction followed in his wake as sharks prowl behind a bark at sea ; the sons of Glorious Apollo fled in every direction, some across the stage, and others beneath it ; and now Olympus resounded with " Well done Broad brim ! well done quaker ! go it, long one ! "

But alas ! short was our worthy friend's triumph, for spite of this heavenly *pœan* half a dozen harpies vile, yclept constables, with many assistants, made a charge upon this modern Corybates and quickly overpowered him ; yet was not this effected before " seven of the eleven he paid."

It is almost needless to add, that there was no opera that evening after Othello, or that Mere Groby was clapped in durance for the night, our bail being refused with contempt from our persons being unknown as well as the awful damage done to the property of the musicians.

Next morning we accompanied Groby to

the office and gave our evidence in his favour, explaining the cause of the uproar. He himself was completely dispirited and overwhelmed with shame, and did nothing but sigh and groan; nor would he make any reply to the questions of the magistrate till he was threatened with imprisonment.

After some difficulty, which was chiefly occasioned by the maltreated musicians, most of whom had sticking plaster on their faces, and loudly threatened actions for assault, and battery, the matter was compromised for a considerable sum as an indemnification for the broken crania and cremonas; not, however, before the magistrate had given Groby a very severe rebuke, deeply touched by which as well as that the fiddlers should take so much of his money, he sneaked from the office with a face as disconsolate as if he had just received sentence of transportation.

From this moment the quaker renounced for ever our acquaintance, declaring we were nothing better than parings of the devil's hoof, and attributing to us, very justly, the whole blame of this disastrous exhibition.

On regaining our lodgings, Mrs. Diggens, who had been very uneasy about us, received Foster with such demonstrations of rapture that I for the first time began to give some credit to a supposition which its preposterousness would never allow me formerly to do, and this was, that Mrs. Diggens had actually conceived a passion for my friend.—This extravagant and ridiculous surmise, which previous circumstances had given birth to, was placed out of all question by what occurred during this afternoon.

From the effects of the previous day's debauch I stretched himself on my bed under the influence of an intolerable head-ache, when Mrs Diggens entering and finding me neither stir nor speak, concluded that I was fast asleep, and repaired to the room opposite in which Foster sat reading. Poor Foster had about as much suspicion of his having inspired a flame in the landlady's breast as she had of my being wide awake; and as his room fronted mine so that I could distinctly hear and even see(if the door was open) all that passed within, it may be supposed I availed myself

of such a circumstance, on hearing to my astonishment Mrs. Diggens thus deliver herself—

“ Mr. Foster,” said she, “ I am really concerned at seeing you and Mr. Butler looking so ill and thoughtful; I declare, as how, I never saw a man look more unhappy, unless it were my husband, poor dear man! when he was courting of me, and despaired of succeeding. Fifteen years come Shrove Tuesday since we went to Ramsgate by the hoy! I hope Mr. Foster there is nothing in the lodgings you find fault with; the servant perhaps is less attentive than she ought to be, the slut — or I—I perhaps ?”—

Here she paused, looked prim, and fixed her eyes upon the splay foot on which she balanced herself whilst she spoke, and which foot bore a strong resemblance to an ass’ hoof—extremely overgrown through want of paring.

Foster, who had been reading some diverting manuscript all the time this speech was delivered, and was smiling at some brilliant passage, hearing himself addressed by his landlady turned towards her with that smile still playing on his handsome features, and inquired

what were her commands.—The infatuated Mrs. Diggens straightways applied this bewitching smile to herself; and a thousand golden hopes, by its fatal influence, at once pervaded her tender heart.

“—Commands!” said she reiterating her antique simper, “sure you have a mind to be jocose to-night. Alas! it is not a woman’s part, Mr. Foster, to give commands, but to obey them. We are all of us the slaves of men! —the victims of men.” And here she suddenly dismissed her simper and sent forth a sigh which sounded like the scrubbing of a wooden floor.

“Well, well,” replied Foster, “if the word command does, like that of *obey*, to many others give you offence, I prithee, what is your pleasure? what do you want?”—

“I take offence! Ah God forbid it should be said that I ever took offence at such a sweet peaceable gentleman as you—one whom every woman must, on the contrary, love—to show attention.”

Foster was somewhat staggered by this warm panegyric and though he did not precisely perceive any thing he had done to

deserve it, he attributed it to having brought me there as a lodger, or her having perhaps heard of his exerting himself to get me the reportership; but the drift of the encomium never entered his mind, and he stopped Martha's eloquence by sternly demanding her business.

Mrs. Diggens, with some confusion of manner, repeated her first words, when my friend assured her that neither of us had any present intention of quitting our lodgings, having no reason to be displeased with them, and that if we received the same attention we should not think of it until we did so for ever.

“For ever!” re-echoed the landlady her eyes dilating themselves whilst her face assumed a shade but one degree lighter than yellow soap; “Is it possible! leave us for ever—never more to see you with these eyes! O cruel youth,” continued she covering her eyes with her apron, “if you go I shall die; yes I shall die outright, Mr. Foster.”

My much amazed friend who expected this touch of pathos about as much as he did a locust cloud, sat for a second or two in speechless wonder; the manuscript he had been perusing fell from his hand, whilst at the same

time with most ruinous quelsch descended on his toes the knees of Mrs. Diggens, who seizing him with all the might of her brawny arms entreated him not to break her heart by leaving her.

“ O criminy, criminy !” exclaimed she, hugging him after the fashion of a bear who is dispensing the *coup-de-grace* to some miserable victim. “ O kind Sir, kind Mr. Foster, pity a poor wretch whose heart is your own : yes you have stolen my heart and should not refuse to show compassion.”

Foster having recovered himself, started up in great consternation saying, “ Compassion ! Yes, in God’s name do I compassionate you from the bottom of my heart—”

But no sooner had he proceeded thus far than Martha, without waiting for the conclusion, which would have run thus “ for your being out of Bedlam.”

Started up quite conscious of a mutual flame, and in her ardour to salute the lips which had pronounced her happiness, she squirted out such a profuse secretion of tobacco juice that her lover’s face became the picture of a universal

deluge above which towered his nose like some goodly mountain.

This had been too much even for him who said unto his friends, “Miserable comforters are you all,” extricating himself therefore with difficulty from her loathsome embraces, whilst he bestowed upon her every opprobrious epithet which a fertile imagination could devise, he rushed into my apartment boiling with indignation, and a look which might either have been taken for the wildness of frenzy or extreme terror. I, who had witnessed the whole of this extraordinary scene could contain my gravity no longer, but burst into such a roar of laughter that I thought my skull with the pains of the head ache would have split like an over ripe apple;—when these permitted me to move, I advanced to the mortified Mrs. Diggins who lay weeping and rolling about on the rug like a large ale barrel, and leading her to her own room, advised her not to despair of overcoming such unworthily placed affections.

CHAPTER III.

“ Are his wits safe ? Is he not of light brain ?
He’s what he is ; I may not breathe my censure.
What he might be, if what he might he is not
I would to Heaven he were.”

Othello.

WHEN I had disposed of the enamoured Martha, I rejoined Foster, and could not help bantering him about the violent passion where-with he had inspired the landlady ; at which he was so amazed and disgusted, that it was with difficulty I prevailed upon him not to pack up his things and leave instantly the lodgings; nor would he agree to remain, until Mrs. Diggens had come to a clear capitulation, and

promised faithfully never again to be guilty of such “cursed folly and impertinence,” for such was the harsh christening he chose to bestow upon the fervour of her love.

Laborious as was Foster’s drudgery in perusing, reviewing and eulogising the super-abundant trash which emanated from the perennial pens of the public scribes, it was not altogether without diversion. His occupation and residence was soon discovered by that class of writers, whose former head-quarters was the immortal Grub Street: and his favour and recommendation courted with as much solicitude as is some great man’s patronage in matters of much greater consequence. This however, was in very many cases impossible to bestow, and although now and then the beauteous face of some novel spinning spinster, or the good dinners of some old rhyming ninny might obtain for their lucubrations a favourable specimen, or even a powerful puff, he was often forced to put his veto on much misapplied ink and paper. It was amusing to see him seated in his easy chair with many volumes of works he had previously read lying before

him, writing reviews, advertisements and puffs in all their grades, from the masked to the palpable; whilst numerous notes requesting his kind attention to flimsy productions, or his company to the more substantial fare of beef and pudding, lay in motley confusion amidst a mass of manuscripts.

Very frequently however he was visited by those most intolerable of all coxcombs and bores, authorlings both male and female, who seemed to worship him as a sort of deity or Prester John ; and indeed he was so, in his little sphere ; for 'tis nothing wonderful that critics who are only known or dreaded by one particular and generally unfortunate class of persons, should receive more adulation than they deserve, or assume a little tyranny and caprice over those, and those only who are at their mercy, or care a farthing for their venom.

Foster having so many invitations of course left me often to myself, though I must do him the justice to say, that he often refused them, for the sake of enjoying my company ; a piece of friendly self-denial which, considering our circumstances was something very magnani-

mous. One day he went to dine with a friend some distance from town, and I was sitting by myself reading some notes which I had taken of a Coroner's inquest, when Mrs. Diggens who knew not of Foster's being from home ushered unexpectedly a young lady into the room. She was a tall elegant looking girl with a faultless figure, and as far as I could discover through the medium of a very thick veil extremely beautiful. She seemed embarrassed in her manner as if she had taken some step which she repented of, and her voice, which was exceedingly sweet, betrayed her agitation when she said, "Mr. Foster I presume?"

"No Madam," replied I, rising in some confusion from so unexpected a visit, "Mr. Foster is at present from home, but if there is any thing in which I can be of service I shall be happy to receive your commands."

The lady without answering, now turned to Mrs. Diggens as if for some explanation, which she instantly gave, by declaring she was not aware that Mr. Foster was out, else she would not have given her honour the trouble of walking up stairs.

"Oh! no trouble at all," answered the fair visiter; "my business which is of no very great consequence, was with Mr. Foster, and I am only sorry that I have intruded on this gentleman."

I in return assured her there was no intrusion; and suspecting that she was one of the fashionable authoress's acquainted her that I was Foster's intimate friend and if she had any thing to communicate on literary matters or required any information respecting any works on which he was engaged, I could perhaps satisfy her as well as himself as I was so much with him. It happened that I had struck the right string, for the lady after some hesitation said.—

"Since, Sir, you possess so much of Mr. Foster's confidence in such matters, it were useless for me to deny that you have guessed rightly the nature of my business. I may therefore at once acquaint you that I was recommended by a friend to call on Mr. Foster in order to obtain his opinion of some poetry which I have brought with me."—Here she paused from a little excusable bashfulness,

when I remarked that if she would entrust me with the manuscript, I would give it Foster on his return, and engaged myself that he would furnish her with a speedy opinion after perusal. She thanked me in a very engaging manner, requesting that I would make an excuse to my friend for her having taken the liberty of calling upon him, but that she had some reasons for concealing from her relatives that she was the author, and had made bold to intrude rather than run any risk by trusting her secret with any other person. I replied that Mr. Foster would feel highly honoured, as did myself by such confidence which she might rely would never be abused ; and the young poetess then turning to Mrs. Diggens whom curiosity had detained in the room begged she would have the goodness to bring a parcel from the servant who waited for her below.

“ I believe,” said the lady occupying a chair which I presented to her, “ Mr. Foster will be surprised (to say the least of it) at being thus troubled by an utter stranger, but when a woman, Sir, has the vanity or ambitious weak-

ness to attempt distinguishing herself as an authoress she will you see go great lengths in order to court a modicum of Fame or rather perhaps I should call it flattery."

This was spoken in a less constrained manner than she had hitherto indulged in, and I was sorry when she was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Diggens who carried in her hand a common copy book folded in brown paper.

"This Sir," said the lady rising and presenting me with the parcel, "is the mighty matter for which I have trespassed on your time. In it Mr. Foster will find a note explaining my wishes respecting the contents, and if he will be good enough to drop me a line after he has had leisure to peruse the manuscript, my servant shall call for it."

Scarcely had she uttered this, when we heard a prodigious noise and scampering on the stairs with cries of "Catch her, catch her! Ah good Lord how angry madam will be! Massa John's fault for giving such bad basket. Catch her, Catch her!"

Whilst I was listening with pricked up ears to these strange words, which were uttered in a shrill voice, lo ! there flew into the room, with enfuriated looks, bristled back, and a tail as thick and rough as a bottle brush, a tremendous tortoiseshell mouser. The young lady immediately uttered an exclamation of surprise, and blaming the servant for their carelessness in permitting the newly purchased beauty to escape, she tripped towards the door to close it, and so make a prisoner of the terrified animal. This well intentioned action, was as many charitable ones are, the direct cause of its destruction, and of such a savage scene as is rarely witnessed in civilised society. For being perhaps rendered more nervous and irritable by my sedentary pursuits, I no sooner beheld this odious demon than my spirit was enflamed with more than its usual horror and dismay on such occasions, and my frame felt as if fire or lightning had passed suddenly through it. Every sense was strung to a pitch of painful intensity—my eyes were swollen and bloodshot, and reason as completely eclipsed as ever was man

by wine or madness. In short, throwing away the copy-book which nearly fell a sacrifice to the fire, I seized the poker, and in spite of the shrieks of the fainting poetess, the cries and ejaculations of Mrs. Diggens, the jabbering, oaths, and ineffectual opposition of the footman, I flew with my usual rancour on the miserable mouser, nor did I desist from the application of my weapon until I had fairly beaten it into a mass of motionless mummy.

This was not effected without confusion worse confounded. All thought me mad; the lady as much from personal terror as horror fell into a dangerous swoon, whilst Mrs. Diggens, whose lusty carcass fright had stowed behind the door, was long unable to afford her any assistance. In the meantime, the footman, who was no Scipio Africanus but a blackamoor, stood staring in stupid amazement, exhibiting two rows of polished ivory betwixt his thick expanded lips, whilst his gold headed cane was awkwardly uplifted as if to ward off some blow which he thought probably, awaited his own pate from the poker

which brandished before his eyes in all directions. Had he been nearer the door, he had certainly left his mistress to her fate and taken to his long heels, and as matters were, judging from the trembling bend of his legs one might have fancied him about to sink beside the miserable young lady. The deed however was done, the expiation to my maniac fury fulfilled, and throwing away the murderous instrument with a crash, which instantly brought the blackamoor on his knees and the laced cocked hat from his head, I rushed into my bed room, bolted the door, and flung myself breathless on the bed, every nerve and vein throbbing and thrilling with dreadful agitation. When I arose, it was to admit Foster who had knocked several times to no purpose.

“What in the name of heaven ails you?” cried he, “or what has taken place? for the whole room is turned topsy turvy—the carpet torn and disfigured with blood, and Mrs. Diggens, whom I could not wait to listen to, all pale with fright and swearing you are as mad as a March hare. Have you been fighting, or what can possibly have happened?”

I explained as coherently as I could all that had taken place, at which Foster, who was glad to hear matters were no worse, could not forbear laughing, as he said :

“ Well Butler, I had satisfied myself that your unfortunate antipathy would never have found a victim in these lodgings, knowing as I did that Mrs. Diggens has no affection for the feline race ; however, this proves that no man need expect to control circumstances, and that calamities will befall us in spite of all our prudence. Without being such an extreme fatalist as you are, I do believe that a man destined to be drowned will scarcely be hanged, and may in time, perhaps, be induced to credit that there is no scratch on the heart or hand, whether it come from cat or woman, but what is produced by an intricate concatenation of supreme causes which are only regarded by us as sceptical from their being too minute or mysterious for our comprehension. But what sort of a young lady was this, whose visit caused such uproar ? I pity from my heart the fright she must have got.”

“ Whilst I was possessed of my senses,”

replied I, “I saw little or nothing of her features for she wore a provokingly baffling veil, and when I was acting the madman, I was of course incapable of attending to any thing but the horrible cause of my wild behaviour—I may venture however, to pronounce her young and beautiful.”

“And pray what was her name?”

“I never asked her, nor did she think proper to give it me.”

“Indeed! that is a very great pity; but did she leave no card, no address?”

“Aye, now I think of it, she did say you would find a note with her poetry, acquainting you of her motives in sending it here, and containing I doubt not her name and residence.”

This immediately set Foster a rummaging most diligently amidst the chaos of books and papers which covered the floor of our parlour; but all his search was useless, no book or parcel resembling what I described was to be found, and he at last brought himself to believe with me that it had unfortunately been thrown by me into the fire. As is na-

tural in such circumstances, he was now more anxious than ever to find out the name of his fair visiter, and his enquiries respecting her appearance became more numerous and particular.

“ Was she tall ?”

“ Yes, rather so than otherwise.”

“ What sort of a figure ?”

“ One of the best I have ever seen.”

“ Ha ! and did you notice her feet and ankles ?”

“ Yes, as to them I could speak with the fullest confidence, having cast down my eyes more than once from the confusion I was thrown into by being surprised in a lazy deshabille by so fashionable a looking lady ; and I affirmed them to be exquisitely modelled.”

Here my friend heaved an amorous sigh, and after putting some other questions which I could not answer, asked what sort of a creature the maid was, who had accompanied this piece of perfection.

“ She had no maid with her,” replied I.

“ Why did you not say so but this moment ?”

“ I affirmed that her servant permitted a cat which she had newly purchased or received as a present to escape, but that blundering wretch was a blackamoor, and no female.”

No sooner had I said this than Forster started, turned deadly pale, and after gazing upon me for a moment in a state of stupefaction, asked me seriously if I remembered the colour of his livery.

I was much surprised at the earnestness with which he enquired this, but without making any comments answered : “ I remember it right well, by the token that it had more than once been nearly rubbed down by my poker for his very excusable but aggravating interference—it was green with some gold embroidery.”

“ The same, the very same,” cried Foster, snapping his fingers and dancing about the room ; after which he seized the bed-post and set and capered to it with as much spirit as if he had been performing before some country partner at a penny wedding.

“ What is the meaning of all this ? ” demanded I in very great astonishment.

“What is the meaning?” reiterated he, accomplishing a *tour de force* in the corner, which set everything in the room a jingling and trembling, “only this, that it must be her, and her only. O happy day!—blessed stars—angelic creature—most excellent poetess!—adorable deity—tol lol riddle de dee.”

In this manner did he run on for a considerable time, whilst I, after lying a silent spectator of his wonderful agility, begged he would cease his antics, and explain their cause.

“That is easier asked than answered,” replied Foster, “not that I have any reasons for refusing to gratify your curiosity, for I possess no secrets, but I really feel at a loss how to handle the subject; you must however, know that the young lady in question is—is—”

“Some titled, or fashionable scribbler I suppose?”

“Pshaw! titled or fashionable,” rejoined he, with a contemptuous curl of his lip, “do you think I form my estimate of humanity by its

follies ; or that what is called title, fashion, or even wealth, can make me respect one jot more the possessor ? As for the one a breath may make them, as a breath has made—and as for riches, much as I desire to be troubled with such a personal encumbrance, I would as lief fall down and worship a golden calf, or cross myself devoutly in a bank, as pay homage simply on their account to any human being.”

“ Well, but what of the lady, what is she ?”

“ She is the most beautiful creature in the world, and I believe one of the most virtuous ; and this, Butler, is all I know about her.”

“ If this be the case,” said I, “ how should her sending you some poetry to revise, throw you into such ecstasy ; but, above all, how can you cry up the lady’s virtue when you must confess yourself ignorant even of her name ?”

“ There is nothing more uncommon my friend, in a person’s lavishing praises on what he is desirous of possessing, than on that he has

to dispose of; but I can furnish you with a more satisfactory reason for this eulogy than simple declamation. You must know then, that the first time I saw her was in Puffum, the publisher's shop, where she put down her name to a charitable subscription."

"Oh, then, you do know the lady's name?"

"No, not her name—what she wrote, I presume, was the initials of her name; and the donation which was two guineas, was indeed well applied, since it was in behalf of a widow and six children, whose husband a rather popular author, had just died in jail without leaving a penny to bury him, or a morsel to feed his family."

"Alas! Foster," said I, "how much misery exists in this world unknown to those who derive pleasure from the produce of its struggles. Were one to know the tears which have bedewed the sugar cane which ministers to our luxury, or the sorrow and privation in which some of the noblest emanations of genius have been born, it would I am certain, detract ma-

terially from their gratification. But could not Mr. Puffum, who knows every body, give you any account of her?"

"No, he knew nothing more about her than myself, and I began to despair ever again seeing her, when one day I stumbled upon her and the black footman in Hyde Park."

"And did not that impudence which so often befriends you in such matters, do you good service on that occasion?"

"A truce to your waggery. I solemnly protest I never before felt such an undescribable awe and admiration; I durst scarcely lift my eyes to look at her, though when I did so, they were rivetted by her charms—nevertheless, I followed her home as I thought."

"I never doubted to hear as much."

"Well I could not help it, but followed her to a house in Berkeley Square; and you may fancy my disappointment when on making all the enquiries possible, I found there were no young ladies dwelt there but a superannuated General and his maiden sister."

"I can fancy it very well, though I do not

think it could surpass what you just now showed on not finding her parcel."

"Alas!" replied Foster, turning suddenly grave, "how unfortunate it was that you came into collision with that accursed animal; I should otherwise have certainly become acquainted with her history."

"I cannot help thinking, Foster, that you are much too sanguine in concluding our visiter to be the same person as your fair and charitable unknown, for how many young women are there in town who take a judicious pride in having their charms set off by the foil of an attendant black barbarian; and as for a green livery, it is I think far from being uncommon. Be this, however as it may, you would run no small hazard of endangering your future peace of mind, were you presumptuously to place your affections on one so far removed above you by fortune, if not by birth."

"A fig for fortune," cried Foster; "and as for birth, let me tell you my father was a Welchman, and it would have required a skillful and bold genealogist to have convinced him

that his pedigree could not be traced as high as Noah ; and which of us would wish to go further ? Were she as high as Heaven I love her ; and if I perish, better perish in the blaze of the glorious sun than sink into the Barathron of despair. You may rest assured, Butler, that if ever I can discover this angelic creature, I shall not fail to offer her the sincere homage of a heart which leaped into slavery the moment my eyes beheld her.”

“ Take my advice,” observed I, “ and instead of talking so poetically, reason with yourself on the probable unhappy consequences of giving way to a hopeless passion.”

“ Tis very well my friend, reasoning on matters which admit of discussion, nay even on your old guess-work inexplicables of Fate and Freedom ; but as to love, it admits neither of logic or laws. As well attempt to reason yourself into an insensibility of the fragrance or beauty of the rose, as treat dialectically the passion, nor suppose I intend to speak sneeringly when I remind you how ineffectual you yourself have found the force of reason to be in such matters.”

I must confess that this *argumentum ad hominem* fairly silenced me, and I was not sorry at our conversation being cut short by the well known knock of the Postman.

CHAPTER IV.

“ Our friends and relatives stand weeping by
Dissolved in tears to see us die,
And plunge into the deep abyss of wide eternity.
In vain they mourn, in vain they grieve,
Their sorrows cannot ours relieve.”

Roscommon.

THE visits of this most welcome of all public functionaries was more usually bestowed on behalf of Foster than myself, but on this occasion I heard my own name mentioned, and presently afterwards Mrs. Diggens herself entered with a letter. This I at once perceived by the jagged scrawl and crumpled paper was from Jasper Harrison, and having little doubt

but it contained a sufficiency of that sage advice which I had besought in my perplexity, I was not over anxious to examine its contents; but on doing so, these surprised me not a little, for they intimated that my uncle was suspected to be on his death bed, and that Dr. Pow had ordered Jasper to entreat me not to lose a moment in hastening to the Hall should I desire to obtain the forgiveness, if not the blessing of my relative. I handed this letter to Foster, who strongly advised me to set off by the mail which started in about an hour, and by his active assistance having made the necessary preparations and secured a seat, I was in that short space of time ensconced in the vehicle and on my way to Northumberland.

When we reached the pretty little town of——I ordered a post chaise, and without stopping to take any refreshment proceeded on to my uncle's residence.

As I drew nearer the venerable Hall each tree and hedge became familiar to me as do the privates of a company to its captain, on inspecting it for the first time after a leave of

absence ; there was some little association too connected with almost every rod of land, lane, or by path which I passed ; and when I came to that turning of the road which conducted to the avenue of the Grange, poor Alfred Wyndham rose before me with his bleeding breast, and a look more of compassion than suffering—I drew myself back into a corner of the chaise, and the tears gushed plentifully from my eyes.—In half an hour more I was in sight of the Grange itself with its noble avenue, along which I had first seen the beauteous Agnes Landon come to win the heart and hand of that beloved friend who was destined to fall by my unhappy hand ; and then after proceeding through a portion of my uncle's property, our old ivy-covered family Hall with its ponderous chimneys, numerous different sized windows, and old rook-domiciled trees came full into view.

I felt at this moment a fulness of feeling attended nevertheless by a deadness of the heart, and a timidity which I could not account for ; so much so, that I wished the postilion who drove very quickly and often looked round

expectant of applause for so doing would moderate his pace.

But crack went his whip, whiz went the wheels, and in a few minutes we turned into my uncle's stately avenue, each tree of which though destined never to be mine, was as familiar and friendly to my eyes as if my whole life had been spent in superintending their growth. I could not help observing that the traces of carriages were much more numerous than when I was a denizen of the place and which I rightly enough attributed to the numerous visitors making inquiries after Mr. Butler. An observation however trivial in itself, by fixing for a while the attention often gives the mind time to steady herself ; and I believe it was the short time I took to form this very obvious conclusion which rendered me comparatively calm and collected to what I had been, when the chaise stopped at the vestibule.

Every blind of the front windows was down, the bell muffled, the gravel before the door covered with straw and litter, and as I alighted the door was slowly opened with much

precaution against noise by the venerable Jasper Harrison in person. The old man after gazing upon me for nearly a minute with his misty eyes, at last recognised and embraced me warmly though without saying much, and to my first question respecting how my uncle was, he only shook his head in such a manner as convinced me that no hope was to be entertained of his recovery.

“ Go your ways into the front parlour Mr. Francis,” said he, “ whilst I settle with the lad and order James to put your luggage into your chamber; you will find some relations of yours there who have come to look after your uncle in this straight, or rather,” muttered Jasper, “ his money bags, for well know they I trow their nearness of kin.”

“ Who are they Harrison ?”

“ Why who should they be but these Lumley’s from Lunnun or the neighbourhood? brother and sister, the only children of your father’s only sister, whose temper God wot was about as sweet as sloe juice—and therefore your own cousins. Here have they been above a week as anxious for my poor old master’s

drawing his last breath, as if it were of no more value than a flask of his second rate Burgundy. But you look tired and must be hungry, so go your ways into the parlour and I will send in a luncheon—and Mr. Francis,” continued the butler lowering his voice, “try and draw together as well as you can with these cousins, for they are prouder than any Gentile Pasha; and before many hours are over I believe they may do just what they please in this establishment.”

So saying Jasper without receiving or waiting for any reply hobbled off muttering to himself, for I was sorry to observe that the few years which had elapsed since I last saw him had converted his stiffness into lameness. Otherwise his appearance was very little altered, for his hair though a trifle thinner, had not grown a whit more silvery; and his features were just the same only a little more shrunk and shrunvelled.

Of these Lumleys I had frequently heard though I had never before seen them, my uncle having always had an aversion to the family; nor did it require any hint from Jasper to make

me aware that Mr. Butler after giving me up altogether had sent for them as the persons who were destined alike by succession and determination to succeed to the whole or at least the bulk of his property.

It was therefore with no feeling of particular good-will towards them that I entered the apartment, for none of us even the best can repress sentiments of jealousy, (however unjust) towards those who are more fortunate in obtaining that to which we think ourselves in every respect as fairly entitled. I nevertheless assume to myself the merit of having nearly divested myself of such an unworthy *animus* before I had fully entered the parlour, in which I found a lady and a gentleman seated in different recesses of the large deep windows. The former was very tall, far from beautiful, and, I should think bending on one side or other of forty; whilst her brother might have been about six-and-thirty, was rather manly and *militaire* in his appearance, for great part of which he was manifestly indebted to that only true Prometheus the London tailor.

This gentleman treated me, on my entrance,

with a prolonged stare through an eye-glass, and then whispering something to the lady, advanced towards me, saying—

“ Mr. Butler, I presume?”

I bowed, whilst he thus continued after returning the salutation :

“ I was only apprized this morning Mr. Butler, that my uncle had at length conquered his unfortunate prejudice against you, so far as to wish to see you before he dies.”

“ I am glad of it Sir, exceedingly glad of it; for in such a situation, where we have so much need of mercy we should not withhold forgiveness.”

“ Mary dear, (turning to his sister) this is your cousin, Mr. Butler,—my sister Sir, Miss Lumley.”

I again bowed respectfully, but as there was nothing in the manner of either which impressed me with the least respect, I sat down in silence, leaving the captain (for such was his rank) to take upon him the whole conduct of the conversation.

“ I am very sorry Mr. Butler,” said the captain elevating his eye-brows and looking

lachrymal “to acquaint you that the case of our worthy relative is regarded as quite hopeless, not only by Dr. Pow the family attendant, but by the other physicians who joined the consultation. He is sadly reduced and changed, as you will judge for yourself when you see him; that is to-say (begging your pardon) if he continues in the same mind, and may be prevailed upon to see you,—for let me tell you, he showed some aversion even to seeing *us* although he sent expressly for us, and on no other account, at least, seven days ago.”

“It is ten days to-morrow Charles,” observed the sister, “since we were sent for and three since we last saw him. He was then indeed dreadfully reduced nor can it in my opinion, be desirable to such as love the kind, worthy old man, to see him lingering in suffering, especially as the faculty have pronounced the disease inevitably mortal.”

I mumbled something in the way of assent, to which neither attended ; but Captain Lumley thus continued :

“Certainly not; it cannot be desirable to see any person warring vainly against fate, and

as death is a debt we must all sooner or later pay, the fewer preliminaries the better to so disagreeable an adjustment. I dare say you are of my way of thinking, Mr. Butler?"

" To a certain extent Sir, I am. How long has my uncle been ill?"

" Three weeks yesterday, is it not Mary?"

" Yes, Charles, since he was first attacked—a terrible long illness, considering the pain he experiences."

" A most procrastinated state of suffering," rejoined the captain, stamping slightly with the heel of a well-built boot which he had been minutely examining, and then erecting his carriage as if he had been about to pass a general in review; he added, " and he must have a wonderful strength of constitution to hold so long at bay his grisly enemy. I have little doubt but this is the effect of his amazing regularity and temperance; for, as you lived if I remember, several years with my uncle, you will be able to vouch for his having been unique in both these qualities."

" He certainly was," replied I, " and though his habits were far from congenial to the levity

of youth, I can nevertheless assure you I have spent here some very happy years."

"Doubtlessly they would be happy; for, although my uncle was as you say, too fastidious about some trifling things, and as uncompromising in his ways and opinions as the Medes and Persians, yet was he in the main, one of the kindest-hearted men in the world; nor is the place itself disagreeable, for there is an air of antiquity about it, combined with many of the charms of agricultural improvement."

"Pshaw! Charles," exclaimed his sister, "I wonder you can talk so foolishly,—I do not mean with respect to my worthy uncle, but the estate, for in my eyes it has little to recommend it but its rent-roll. Why, what is there to be seen from these windows but trees behind trees, and that eternal park? One might as well be a squatter in a back settlement of America!—and then not a church, spire, house, cottage, nor even the smoke of one to be seen, except that which rises from the woods which envelope the Grange. As to that *caw-cawing* community before the very door, I need say

nothing; for as far as my ears are concerned, I would as lief live in a street of coppersmiths.— And then that nasty, filthy, black-looking, abominable pond ; I do declare, Charles, if you succeed to the estate, I shall positively insist on your filling up so slimy and disagreeable a pool ; it is really sufficient to fill the house with fever and ague.”

The Captain smiled complacently at this very indirect hint of the probability of his soon becoming lord of the manor, and turning to me, without answering Miss Lumley, said,

“ I think Mr. Butler, that is the very pond our worthy uncle had dragged so carefully when you waggishly locked up poor Jasper Harrison in the cellarage ?”

“ I never locked him up in the cellarage, Sir,” replied I, drily.

“ I ask your pardon then,” said Lumley, “ for the story was so told me. That however, has nothing to do with the appearance of the pond which (turning to his sister) I certainly agree with you Miss Lumley, is far from picturesque, and if ever it be in my power I will

engage to gratify your most reasonable antipathy to the Hall."

My perception must have been very obtuse, if it did not discover that the intention of the amiable Lumleys was to crow a little over me, on account of their having ingratiated themselves with Mr. Butler after my disgrace; the which annoyed me more, because I felt that I should lower myself exceedingly in my own eyes, if I permitted them to perceive that I was in the least degree chagrined.

At this critical moment, I therefore felt much relieved by the entrance of honest Jasper Harrison, with a substantial luncheon and a venerable flask of wine, which without regarding a syllable of my objections, he drew; whispering to me at the same time: "'Tis out of the christening bin, Mr. Francis; there is just nine left, and I don't see why you should'nt have one before the rest go, perhaps, to those who less deserve them."

Although I was in a house of mourning, I could not repress a smile at a speech which recalled so many boyish tricks and sunny days,

and devoting myself to the ham, chicken and cold chine, I washed down a hearty meal, (for which I was well prepared) by several bumpers of perhaps the best bottle of Burgundy then uncorked in the kingdom.

From long abstinence, and having been an utter stranger to such wine, but above all, from the thronging associations connected with that historical bin, I tossed off so many consecutive bumpers of the matchless vintage, that I saw the Lumleys exchange glances of horror and amazement; I however, disregarded such rudeness which bordered on vulgarity, more especially the expressive tosses of Miss Lumley's head; and though I might easily have explained to them how much I stood in need of refreshment, I determined upon treating their incivility with the most determined indifference. I had finished the grosser part of my repast, and despite the censorous observation of the haughty Lumley's, was getting through my Burgundy at a pace worthy of Grangousier, when Jasper re-entered and informed me that my uncle having just awoke from a short sleep, desired immediately to see me.

If I am to call these pages my confessions, as I intended doing on commencing them, 'twere well not to pass over any circumstance which may afford a clue to the scrutinizer of a strange mental constitution ; and, indeed, a person who writes a work of this nature, however much he may amuse the superficial, can only be of service to the serious when he makes himself as clearly seen through as sound chrystal ; for should he have any opacity or flaw which distorts the vision of the psychologist, he might just as well have buried all his follies and feelings in the grave.

This conviction induced me to declare that one other reason for my quaffing so freely of Jasper's sacred wine, was the indescribable apprehension I felt, at seeing again one, whom but for his harshness I really respected, nay I may safely say revered. What I took for timidity, was in truth tenderness ; or something doubtful betwixt the two, like those German coins one knows not whether they be silver or plated : nor did I discover this until the test of the goblet had been applied, when I found myself not one bit the better nerved for such a distressing interview. Every step

I took up those ancient oaken stairs, with their polished and twisted rails, down which I had so often slid at the risk of breaking my young neck, seemed to operate on my frame like the plates of a gigantic voltaic battery; nor did ever a sincere devotee whilst mounting on his pious knees the veritable *Santa Scala* at Rome, experience such a softening sensation as I did upon this occasion.

When I reached the well remembered door of my uncle's chamber, I paused in order to compose myself; until Jasper, who had followed behind without speaking, advanced and opened the door as gently as if it had been composed of the thinnest glass. I entered and found myself within a few paces of Mr. Butler's bed, and immediately behind the capacious well powdered wig of Dr. Pow, who was seated near the head of the bed with his back to the door. The moment he perceived me, he arose, making a consequential motion monitorily of stillness and that I should advance no further, which when he saw was understood, he turned towards my uncle and informed him in a low voice that I was present.

After a pause, Mr. Butler muttered something in reply, when the doctor advancing, took me by the hand in rather a supercilious manner and led me to the opposite side of his patient's bed.

My eyes now fell upon the pale face of my relative, which was so changed that had I seen it under any other circumstances, it could never have been recognized by me; and as I gazed upon it, his dim sunken eyes were fixed upon mine for nearly a minute without his once speaking. Of a sudden, the torments which at intervals left him returned, and turning away his head, he became inattentive to every thing except the prospect of death; and as he did so he moaned in such a piteous manner, that I was melted with compassion, and falling on my knees I pressed his chill wasted hand to my lips and watered it with my tears.

This paroxism having passed away, and an officious nurse whose face I thought I recollecting having moistened his parched lips with a piece of sponge, Mr. Butler endeavoured to speak to me; but so extremely was

he exhausted, that his lips could only articulate at intervals, and had I not been so very near him I never could have caught the little he did communicate. As far as I could connect his words, they were expressive of forgiveness and advice, as also of regret for having treated me with harshness, which it was now too late to amend. The following was the most intelligible sentence he uttered.

“ I have fully forgiven you Francis, and you must endeavour from your heart, to forgive, if you cannot forget, my unfortunate aversion.”

Such were I think the last words he uttered ; on ending which, he was again convulsed with pain, and turned away his face as before to hide from me the torture he underwent ; whilst I still kept possession of his powerless hand, expecting that after the bitter agony had passed he might again speak.

During this short interval however, his racked spirit was almost loosened from its bondage, of which I was first apprised by the Doctor once more putting his finger on his lips after the manner of Harpocrates,

whilst the nurse (well practised in her profession) without consulting her director, withdrew gently a pillow from beneath his waxy cheek, and Mr. Butler lay extended a rapidly stiffening piece of clay. Just before this took place, Jasper Harrison and the Lumleys entered the room; and the party having taken through their tears of real or affected grief, a last look at the corpse, descended, leaving it in charge of the nurse and servants.

Although it is seen that Captain Lumley was no nearer related to the deceased than myself, yet no sooner was my uncle dead, than he assumed the command of the whole establishment: a proceeding to which I had no manner of objection, further, than that many things were done purposely for my vexation. This behaviour on their part, was the more mortifying to me, because I had too much pride in my composition to expect or accept of any pecuniary assistance from them; and besides as Mr. Butler was reported to be a rich man, I thought there might be some probability of his leaving me a thousand pounds, or at least a trifling legacy.

This expectation was I must confess almost smothered by the remembrance of his decisive letter, acquainting me of my being disowned by him;—by Jasper Harrison's sorrowful reception of me—the domineering consciousness of my cousins; and above all, by those expressions of regret which escaped my uncle at his having acted towards me with a harshness it was then too late to palliate or amend. From all this I was neither in any great hopes of getting as much as would pay my travelling expences, nor yet in very agreeable quarters; and often did I curse Jasper in my heart for his officiousness in bringing me to an house of sorrow and mortification, and as often did I wish for the funeral being fairly over that I might return to my employment in town.

To this funeral all the neighbouring gentry were invited by Lumley, my opinion having of course never been taken in the matter; nor in truth, was I at all piqued by this deliberate slight, for being left completely master of my own time, I strolled unseen and undisturbed through the extensive woods and shrubberies; ventured more than one long look at the

Grange where I durst not appear ; and in short gave way to all that solitary melancholy, which Burton believes to be too often the precursor of insanity.

I found a calm mysterious pleasure in revisiting every spot or object, however trivial, to which I could attach any association. The tree on which I had carved my name when but ten years of age, was to me an object of solemn ecstasy ; and, although the date had become illegible, still the prurient bark had not yet closed over the initials, and I gazed upon them till my eyes filled with tears, for I remembered that it was with Wyndham's knife they had been carved.

Then there was the little plot I had dignified by the title of garden, and which lay in a sunny nook near the shrubbery ; this I of course visited, nor was surprised to find that every trace of it had vanished like those more wonderous ones of mighty kings whose names alone are recorded. The calm creeping turf (than which I know no better symbol of oblivion,) had long ago swathed every portion of its beds and walks, nor could any eye but mine have distinguished where its tulips and

anenomies had formerly glittered in all their gaudy pride. The old oak-panelled mansion it may be supposed did not escape a similar scrutiny, and melancholy were the reminiscences which occurred, when in my own little room I still traced the marks of that disastrous tide of blazing wax which Harrison in an unlucky day for himself, and trebly so for me, had ventured to place upon my fire.

“Alas!” thought I, “how little did I then dream that so trifling an occurrence should be the germ of such serious changes and disasters; or that the life blood of my best friend and youthful associate was destined ere long to flow by my hand in such another crimson stream.

In such pursuits, and writing letters to Foster, did I pass the time till the important day of gloomy bustle and confusion arrived. Early in the morning of that eventful day, a magnificent hearse with its nodding plumes and hatchments deposited carefully inside, and one or two funeral assistants on its roof drove up the avenue, followed by several pairs of black horses with their traces and trappings and a long string of mourning coaches. The pro-

cession was to set out at about two o'clock, and for an hour previous, carriage after carriage rolled up the avenue, whilst some which had come from greater distances joined the line on its way to the burying ground.

The service being ended, and the coffin deposited in the family vault over which lies the mailed *effigies* of one of my ancestors, we returned to the coach; or rather I returned, for some of the neighbouring squires had gathered round Lumley, offering him their consolation, and either intentionally or accidentally we got into different vehicles. I was not sorry for this, because the coolness with which every one received or rather shunned me, rendered me anxious to get away; it was clear that my hapless fortunes were fully known to the world, and I was universally looked upon as a leper or the counterpart of Cain; even Doctor Pow a man accustomed to infection, carefully avoided me; and perceiving all this, it may be supposed that I was glad to glide as unnoticed as possible into one of the mourning coaches, from whence perceiving Lumley get into another I ordered the driver to shut the door, and proceed straight to the Hall.

I was the first who arrived at the now almost deserted house, and after telling the driver to send a chaise for me from — I repaired to my room, and set about packing up my things in order that I might be in time for the mail which passed through that place in the evening. I had finished this task and was wondering when they would commence searching for the will, when I was summoned by Jasper Harrison to the drawing-room where the Lumleys and Mr. Hobbs were already assembled for that purpose. On entering, the first person I met was Mr. Hobb's the solicitor, who seemed to have forgotten entirely my former maltreatment of his cats, for advancing he shook me cordially by the hands and declared himself glad to see me.

“ Gentlemen,” said Mr. Hobbs in a suppressed tone of voice, “ our present object, you are aware, is to search for the last will and testament of the late lamented proprietor of this mansion, and to examine every place and depository until we find the same.

“ Now gentlemen, I am professionally aware

that Mr. Butler did, not many months ago, execute such a deed ; and if I remember rightly he hinted to me that it would probably be found in his *escritoir*. But Harrison you can perhaps assist us ?”

“ Yes Sir,” replied Jasper smoothing with a trembling hand the few thin locks which fell on one side of his furrowed forehead, “ I think I can shew you where it will be found ; and if you will only step into my master’s study where the *escritoir* stands, I will go and fetch the keys.”

We of course obeyed this direction, and after remaining a few minutes with the most painful anxiety depicted on every countenance save those of the lawyer and his assistant, Jasper again hobbled into the room with a small bunch of well worn keys. The door was now carefully shut, although Harrison as a privileged person was permitted to remain, and the butler having selected the proper key presented it to Mr. Hobbs desiring him to open the *escritoir*. This he did, when several small drawers appeared in a double row, each locked,

whilst below them were many bundles of papers arranged and labelled with the most scrupulous exactness.

"Mr. Butler was a most particular man," observed the solicitor casting his eye over the papers, "and I have little fear of our soon lighting on the document."

"Now Harrison, which do you think is the likely drawer, and which the key that opens it?" Jasper without answering took the bunch with a sort of sulky indifference, and having selected instinctively as it were the proper key, he pointed with it to one of the corner drawers on the left hand to which it pertained. This key was forthwith applied by Mr. Hobbs, the drawer opened, and sure enough there was the last will and testament of Francis Butler, Esqr.—and a somewhat bulky one too it was.

"Sit down gentlemen," said Mr. Hobbs, "and as the deed is I know fairly written however it may have been filled up, I shall read it, I have little doubt plainly and distinctly."

Immediately a ring was formed around the lawyer. Old Jasper standing nearest the door with his head turned a little on one side as if

to ensure a single syllable's not escaping his ears, and then a pause as if there had been no life in the apartment succeeded, whilst Hobbs opening the will which was neatly fastened with a piece of blue silk ribband unfolded the new crackling parchment and commenced as follows—

CHAPTER V.

“ Besides I know thou art
A public notary, and such stands in law
For a dozen witnesses ; the deed being drawn too
By thee my careful Marall, and delivered
When thou wert present, will make good my title,
Wilt thou not swear this ?”

“ IN the name of God amen. I Francis
Butler, Esq. of —— Hall in the Parish of ——
and County of Northumberland, do make my
will in manner following (that is to say) I give
and devise all my messuages, or tenements,
lands, and hereditaments situate and being in
the Parish of —— in the said County—and all
that my capital mansion house and manor of —

situate, lying and being in the Parish of—
in the aforesaid County of Northumberland, unto
and to the use of my nephew Francis Butler
his heirs or assigns for ever."

Had Mr. Hobbs and his well powdered wig
the moment he ended this sentence, been me-
tamorphosed into the very devil, with horns,
hoofs, and claws, he would have been a less
terrible object to the overpowered Lumleys than
he was in his professional capacity.

The captain started up with a dreadful ex-
eeration, exclaiming there must be some mistake
whilst I, elated almost to lunacy with so unex-
pected a blessing, rubbed my hands, danced
round my chair, and hurrahed with such energy
as electrified all present, and sent Miss Lumley
immediately into a swoon.

"I solemnly aver, that there is no mistake,"
said Mr. Hobbs, stroking his chin, "for the
deed is clearly drawn and distinctly worded,
and I have no doubt as duly signed and at-
tested."

"No, no, there's no mistake," growled Jasper
Harrison, who had never left his station at the
door.

"But Captain Lumley," continued Hobbs in a soothing tone, "do not be disappointed at this commencement, for we have as yet got through but a very small portion of the Will, and know not what the upshot of it may be ; and depend upon it, from what I know of Mr. Butler's affairs, that these estates and mansion, valuable as they are, form the least part of his property."

This consolation, and a sprinkling of cold water having brought Miss Lumley to herself, and reseated me and the captain, whose face was as pale as a drunken under-cook's, Mr. Hobbs again proceeded. But as I cannot possibly expect any reader to have the patience to listen to such a lengthy document as was my worthy uncle's will, which occupied three skins of parchment, I shall only enumerate in as plain unlearned language as possible some of its principal items, with the conditions attached to the testament.

"And I moreover," resumed Hobbs, "give and devise all my freehold lands, tenements and hereditaments lying and being in the parish of ——, in the county of Durham, with their respective appurtenances part where-

of was purchased by James Butler, Esq. my late father deceased, to the aforesaid Francis Butler, my nephew, his heirs and assigns for ever, with and subject to the powers, provisoies, conditions, and limitations hereinafter mentioned and expressed."

"All to Mr. Butler!" cried the Captain, in a tremendous fury, and stamping on the floor; "why, 'tis a deception—an imposition—a forgery!—it shall go into Chancery!—Equity!—Lord Chancellor! — Peers — Woolsack!" raved my disappointed relative, who scarce knew what he was saying whilst his sister reiterating the words "forgery and chancery," again sunk senseless, and for some time remained on the floor, no one having troubled their heads as to what was passing in her quarter.

"I am not yet at the end of the deed," said the lawyer, coolly, "and when it is your pleasure I will proceed—but God bless me! look to the lady: Simon Dusty (addressing his clerk) help, and don't stand staring like a jacklantern."

This exclamation called the attention of every

one saving the Captain to his sister, and she was removed in a state of insensibility into another apartment, where she was consigned to the care of the female domestics.

After this interruption we returned in a body to the study, Lumley exclaiming,—

“ Go on ! in the devil’s name ! go on Sir and let me see whether the old wretch (Satan snatch his soul) has left us a single farthing.”

“ I will, Captain,” replied Mr. Hobbs, in a pacifying manner, “ and remember, Sir, there is an immense deal of property yet undisposed of.”

Here Mr. Hobbs resumed his unpleasant duty, enumerating bonds, mortgages, shares in coal mines, shares in several public companies and speculations, large sums in the funds, and, in short, every species of profitable investment, which will more easily suggest themselves to the papa’s of my fair readers, than to their own unmammomed minds, and all of which devolved on me.

“ Hell and fury !” ejaculated Lumley, “ this is as plain a forgery as a bad shilling. Is my name not in the cursed deed at all? Answer me

that, you old pettifogging scoundrel, who I doubt not, have been at the bottom of this cursed knavery ; is my name even mentioned in that precious production ?”

“ I prithee, dear Sir, be composed,” said Hobbs, who instead of resenting this gross abuse, was evidently in great terror of an assault ; “ I have not yet finished, and be the contents of the will what they may, I swear that the items are all filled up by Mr. Butler’s own hand, as you may easily convince yourself.”

“ Proceed then, without more palaver,” answered the Captain, angrily.

Mr. Hobbs did so with more than usual expedition, being evidently anxious to finish a very disagreeable task ; when the will next mentioned a comfortable annuity for Harrison, some legacies to the servants, and how the old coach horses were to be disposed of ; circumstances which I thought would have turned Lumley quite crazy. It then declared that the residue of his personal property should be equally divided betwixt his sister and himself.

“ And what may that be ?” demanded Lumley, “ the old family coach and its cobwebs, I

suppose, since even the aged horses are disposed of."

It however turned out, that my uncle had not been altogether forgetful of them ; for sums of money differently invested were enumerated by Mr. Hobbs, which came not far short of ten thousand pounds.

Then came the condition under which I was to continue in possession of all this wealth, which is of so singular and whimsical a nature that I have never been able to conjecture what could have given rise to it in my uncle's mind. It declared that if in ten years' time, (calculating from Mr. Butler's decease,) I did not marry a lady of title, whether a widow or otherwise, the whole of this property, with the exception of a thousand a year secured in the funds, was to pass over to the Lumleys, their heirs and assigns for ever, and be equally divided betwixt them ; the Captain receiving the estates at a judicial valuation, and his sister an equivalence in lawful money of the realm.

Such was Mr. Butler's last will, which with his usual precision and formality, had neither

blot, blemish, erasure, nor codicil; nor, in my eyes one single fault or imperfection.

On its being finished, Mr. Hobbs shook me cordially by the hand, wishing me a long and happy enjoyment of my good fortune; as also did poor Jasper Harrison, whose eyes rolled in tears, and at length Lumley, who had been perambulating the room at a pace which might have suited the quick march of the parade, stopped short, and recovering in some degree his composure, said—

“ Gentlemen, I am aware of the ridiculous appearance I have made, and the indecorum I have committed, more especially towards Mr. Hobbs. I believe, however, every one here will confess that there is no small excuse for my conduct, since I came here with every expectation, I may almost say with an assurance from my uncle, that I was to be his heir. So bitter a disappointment is, I repeat a sufficient excuse for my excitement and outrageous conduct; and whilst I have to beg Mr. Hobb’s forgiveness of my rudeness, I must at the same time request that I may not be rendered ridiculous in the eyes of the world.”

All present promptly pledged themselves that whatever had happened should be buried in oblivion ; after which the Captain stretched out to me his hand, and shaking mine kindly, said—

“ Since fortune, Mr. Butler, has befriended you thus graciously, it shall be my study to forget that I ever had any expectations of her favours ; and, believe me, the decrees of fate being thus irrevocably fixed, I entertain not the slightest jealousy towards you, but on the contrary, wish you a long and happy enjoyment of your newly obtained honours.”

This speech, which was delivered with some feeling, banished much of my *antipathy* to Lumley, and in return, I expressed a desire to be on a more friendly footing with his family.

Miss Lumley’s chagrin was much more poignant, and of course less easily conquered or concealed than her brother’s, and after a succession of fainting fits and hysterics, she ordered her brother peremptorily to get ready their carriage for setting out to town. To this however, in her present state, I shewed such

determined opposition, that after some objection in which worldly appearances were strongly urged by the Captain, she assented to remain a couple of days longer.

The first thing I did was to repay Jasper Harrison's kind remittance, but he positively refused a thousand pounds which I put in his hand, declaring that his generous old master had bestowed upon him much more than his wants required ; and it was with extreme difficulty that I persuaded him to accept of five hundred under the protest of furnishing his house, and putting it in fitting order. Indeed, I lay under deeper obligations to honest Harrison than I then knew, for it was not till after the departure of the Lumleys that he told me how my uncle had fully determined on leaving them every thing ; and it was only a few days before their arrival at the Hall, and Mr. Butler's confinement to his bed, that, from Jasper's earnest defence of my character and disposition, he had been induced to put my name into the deed instead of their's.

The truth of this statement I fully credited, but could only show my gratitude by my lips ;

for Jasper, who had few relations, and those distant ones, cared nothing for the vanities of this world, and declared his resolution of devoting the remainder of his days to prayer and preparation for another state : one which he immediately put into execution.

Meanwhile the county was electrified at the news of my uncle's will, and the immense sums he had hoarded during a long life of retirement ; and many of those, who at his funeral had cast upon me a furled brow of scorn, now knit it with rage at having unnecessarily offended one who was confessedly the wealthiest person in their neighbourhood.

Carriages rattled up the old avenue day after day, and cards were left by persons I had neither seen or heard of.

The best way of escaping all this sort of thing was to set off for London, where I had quite enough business to attend to ; so, putting myself into the mail, I was soon deposited in a very comfortable hotel in —— Street.

The first thing I did was to send for Foster, who was much more stupified with astonish-

ment at hearing of my good fortune than ever Alladdin was at the effects of his lamp ; more especially when I offered to settle upon him a salary of five hundred a year, with an apartment in the hotel, provided that he had no objection to devote his time to my affairs, and act the part of Steward and Secretary.

There was nothing could have suited better Foster's taste, and by devoting a few hours a day to the management of my affairs, I had the satisfaction of preventing myself from being pillaged by agents and lawyers, (those subtlest of thieves,) and was probably richer by some thousands per annum. I had not however been long in London, before I was dogged out by fame, and one might have thought me suffering persecution from a host of card engravers, as an owl is harassed by chaffinches and sparrows.

It amazed many of my friends that I should prefer living in a quiet hotel to keeping a splendid establishment. I however, had no great mind to throw away money in downright ostentation for the sake of gratifying the whims

of fools, and therefore, soon became known by the name of grub and miser,—terms, which to the surprise of those who used them most venomously neither drove me out of my comfortable quarters, nor yet as far as they could discover, gave me the slightest concern.

CHAPTER VI.

“ Alexis—here she stayed, among these pines,
Sweet hermitress, she did all alone repair—
Here did she spread the treasure of her hair
More rich than that brought from the Colchian mines ;
Here sat she by these mask’d eglantines,
The happy flowers seem yet the print to bear ;
Her voice did sweeten here thy sugared lines,
To which winds, trees, beasts, birds, did lend an ear.”

Drummond.

“ Then turned he up the covering sheet,
Pray let me see the dead ;—
Methinks she looks all pale and wan,
She hath lost her cherry red.”

Old Ballad.

IT may be taken for granted, that a person whose chief motive for writing is the illustration of a weakness almost peculiar to himself,

will have little hesitation in declaring others in which he is sure of finding plenty of fellowship ; I must, therefore, freely confess, that from my earliest years, I have had a strong partiality for revisiting places in which I have spent happy, or even unhappy hours.

My behaviour, immediately after Mr. Butler's death, will verify the predilection that I entertain for a pursuit which is not altogether unprofitable ; for he who indulges in it may perhaps be led into juster conclusions respecting the value of Time and the vanity of those things in which it is too often expended, than he otherwise might be.

When a man indeed, revisits those spots of sportive boyhood, “ where we're forgot, but which we ne'er forget,” his heart must be strangely impervious, or his mind unreasonable, if he take not a startling note of the fleetness of feather-footed time ; if he cast not the log-line (as it were) upon that varied, yet rapid current, which is bearing him onwards to eternity ; nor see before his eyes a more or less depleted sand glass, the gloomy grains of which can never be at rest. If he be not unreasonable, I say, that

such a disposition of mind must draw him into many sober reflections, and purge most efficiently his soul.

One inducement for my repairing, in person, to the Marquis of ——, was, that I might visit my esteemed friend and preceptor the reverend Thomas Tomkins, and wander through scenes endeared to me by the presence of my ever-beloved Eliza Mansfield; for it must be known that his lordship's seat lay not very many miles distant from that neighbourhood.

With this purpose, I set off sooner than we had at first intended, in order that I might have a day or two at my own disposal; and Foster was not a little surprised at my doing so, until I fully explained to him the reason. Not to give any unnecessary trouble to the good Parson, who I knew led one invariable routine of calm retirement, we put up the carriage at a small village about a mile from his house and walked there. I found it precisely as I had left it, and with just the same inmates. Dr. Tomkins had grown fatter and also blinder, for he did not recognize me, though Miss Grissel did so instantly: both,

however, were as glad to see me as if I had been their nearest and dearest relative.

An hour, nor yet a couple was sufficient to talk over the one half we had to say; so we willingly accepted an invitation to dinner, I having already declared my intention of walking to Mansfield Lodge, which was not less than three miles off. Dr. Tomkins, I have little doubt, fathomed my melancholy motives for this stroll; for I perceived him cast a significant glance towards his sister, which was returned by one equally expressive of concern on her part, though not a single observation escaped them. As for myself I knew perfectly what was passing in their minds, (for they knew of my unfortunate *amour*, although mistaken as to the object,) and my confusion must have been sufficiently obvious to them as quitting the Parsonage, we directed our steps towards a place which abounded with as many melancholy remembrances as my own family mansion.

After following the high road for upwards of a mile, I struck into a by path, that intersected that lane about the very spot, where

I first met with Mansfield and his daughters, when he himself was so brutally assaulted by his Irish steward. The nearer I drew to this well remembered place, the more overpowering became my feelings ; and Foster who well knew the cause, had the kind delicacy to linger purposely behind, so as to keep me within sight without intruding upon my sorrows.

At length I came to the old twisted iron gate of the avenue, the lower portion of which was matted with weeds and briars ; and alas ! how wrung was my heart to see the horrible desolation which the axe had committed amongst its proudest trees, as well as those woods and clumps which formerly threw a venerable grandeur over this fairest portion of the property.

Formerly the mansion was perfectly hidden from the eye, its site being only distinguished by the curling smoke of its ample chimneys ; but now the whole cluster of buildings stood naked, like a fallen and friendless favourite at court, and so striking was the change, that I could scarcely bring myself to believe it was the same place. Here I made a long pause, and

finally fell into a reverie, from which I was aroused by Foster's asking me if I intended calling on the family. This was in truth the very question which my mind was at the moment canvassing; and I at length resolved upon calling and enquiring after them.

We therefore proceeded leisurely along the thin avenue, and whilst we waited for the bell being answered, my eye took a hasty survey of the edifice, which I grieved to find was in some parts considerably dilapidated, and the whole evidently neglected. A servant whose face I did not remember, ushered us into the drawing-room, which I was pleased to find presented much of its former appearance, though things were less orderly arranged than when I first remembered it; I had, however, great difficulty in controlling my feelings, as I recognized the very harp o'er which Eliza's lovely figure used to hang, and which though thrust into a corner, appeared by the state of its strings not to have been utterly forgotten.

I had scarcely made this discovery and indulged the weakness of touching those strings o'er which her fingers had perhaps, so often

flown, when the door opened, and a thin grey haired gentleman entered, who, looking at us without recognizing our faces, bowed in a very polite manner, and was about to have enquired our business, had I not advanced towards him, saying :

“ Mr. Mansfield, you will I fear by this time have forgotten me ; my name is Butler, and some years ago I had the pleasure of being a frequent visiter here.”

“ Mr. Butler ; oh ! yes I remember you very well,” replied the old gentlemen, shaking me cordially by the hand ; nor shall I make any apology for not recognising you, for a few years, has indeed, added much to the manliness of your appearance—with respect to your friend,” continued he, motioning Foster gracefully to a chair, “ I think I am guilty of no such lapse of memory.”

Foster replied that he had often heard me talk of Mr. Mansfield, and rejoiced at an opportunity affording itself of being introduced to him.

To this the Squire responded by a low bow, declaring himself highly honoured, and that

any friend of his young deliverer, (for so he usually called me after the adventure of the steward) should always meet a welcome reception at Mansfield Lodge.

"But sit down, sit down gentlemen," continued he, "and pray let me hear, Mr. Butler, when you returned from India, for of your being in that part of the world but very lately, I duly heard from my daughter, Mrs. Curry, whom you may perhaps remember?"

My heart rose into my throat at this question; yet did I manage not only to keep a good face, but to narrate succinctly my adventures and present situation and prospects.

"I heartily congratulate you on your good fortune," replied Mansfield, "and wish you a long enjoyment of its advantages; I am sorry that I cannot acquaint you in return, of any bright beams of prosperity having fallen on our family since we parted. First, a very heavy and long protracted suit in Chancery was decided against us, partly on account of the perjury of that accursed revengeful villain of an Irishman, from whose murderous fangs you once saved me; and partly because I have all

my life been notoriously opposed in my politics to the present government. Then Mr. Curry died lately very unexpectedly ; and on account of his having neglected to make a clear and proper settlement, we are again unfortunately plunged into the precarious whirlpool of litigation with his heirs at law, respecting some heavy mortgages on my estate, and which by the way Mr. Curry engaged to remove. I don't know whether we are to win or lose the suit ; but this I know, we are in either event sure to be considerable losers of our money ; and what with this and other matters, we have been upon the whole a vexed and harrassed family."

I expressed what I really felt, much concern for Mansfield's misfortunes ; and declared it was an infamy to the country that law which ought to be nothing more than justice, and therefore the cheapest of all commodities should be on the contrary the most expensive.

" Yes," replied the old gentleman, " and the most uncertain, for with all its methodism and formality it is at best but tossing up after all. How just are those lines of Thomson which I

have had by heart ever since I got into Chancery—”

“ The toils of law which dark insidious men
Have cumb’rous added to perplex the truth
And lengthen simple justice into wrong,
How glorious were the day that saw these broke
And every man within the reach of right!”

“ These are lines,” observed Foster, “ which ought to be embroidered on the purse of the Lord Chancellor; but I am of opinion that the day is not far distant when these and many equally oppressive abuses will be reformed with a suddenness which will astound their corrupt patrons.”

“ God grant it!” exclaimed Mansfield, “ and although I fear so desirable an event will not occur in my time, yet I cannot help thinking that there is fully awakened in this country a sense and a determination to crush many of those enormous, hydra-headed abuses which have strangely survived the illegitimate power which produced and fostered them.”

“ Well,” said I, “ if ever I get into Parliament my vote shall never be withheld from such

a laudable purpose ; and I am quite convinced Mr. Mansfield that the only palladium for the property of the rich, is the shewing every encouragement to the happiness and prosperity of the poor. Enough however of politics ; and to turn the subject, I must say you astonished me by saying that Mr. Curry was dead, for he was quite well when I left Bombay which is scarcely two years ago.”

“ Two years bring many changes to many families Mr. Butler ; but more especially in India where life is so precarious. The first intelligence I got of that melancholy event, (and before the letter sent to announce it reached me,) was from my daughter herself who I am sorry to say arrived here in a delicate state of health. You are however pale and tired Mr. Butler, and I must insist upon your taking a glass of wine.”

Here he began to search for some keys in his coat pockets, saying, “ You perceive Sir, I am forced to be keykeeper at last ; and though I have been a solitary one for some time, I do not find that I have made much advancement in housekeeping. Plague upon

the keys! where are they—Oh just where they should'nt be, in the door yonder!"

Never did any thing happen more opportunely than this little fuss of my garrulous old friend, for I felt perfectly dizzy with excitement; and had not Foster purposely or otherwise commenced a brisk conversation with Mansfield my agitation must have been discovered and attributed by him to illness or something very awkward and inexplicable.

Whilst the talkative Squire was recounting to Foster the necessity he had of putting every palatable drinkable under patent lock and key on account of the unquenchable thirst of a favourite old servant, and the probability of there being no wine in the decanters (a suspicion which proved perfectly well founded) I repaired towards one of the spacious and gloomy windows as if to enjoy the view. Here I strove to compose myself, and wiped away the clammy perspiration which had exuded abundantly from my now burning brow. "Eliza Mansfield," thought I, "is here under her father's roof! The lovely Eliza is a widow and may

be mine, yes Heaven has ordained her to be mine!"

I was resolved instantly to ascertain if Mrs. Curry was at the Lodge, and had just nerved myself for renewing the conversation, when the footman entered with two newly decanted bottles of wine.

" You have been deserted then by both your fair daughters Mr. Mansfield?" demanded I after pledging him in a glass of wine.

" I have Mr. Butler," replied he smiling, " and like many other parents I appear in my own eyes to have paid the debt of nature long before I feel resigned to separate from those I hold most dear. I forgot to tell you that my youngest daughter Alice is now Mrs. FitzJames, and a sad thoughtless stripling of a husband has she chosen if all accounts I hear of him be true. As for Mrs. Curry she has not been here long, and were she not confined to her room she would I am sure have been delighted to see you."

I expressed great disappointment at not being able to pay my respects to Mrs. Curry, who

I regretted to hear was indisposed, and begged he would expressly tell her so : I moreover hoped that as I might possibly spend a day or two with Parson Tomkins, I might still have a chance of seeing her.

To this Mansfield courteously replied, “ that he would take upon himself to promise so much, provided we would favour him with our company to dinner on the morrow.”

This invitation I much to Foster’s astonishment immediately accepted of, and on our way back to the parsonage, Foster after waiting a long time for my speaking, at length broke silence by asking what possible reason I could have for deferring so pressing and important a journey.

Whenever a man contemplates doing a foolish thing, he will feel abashed by the reproof of his meanest dependant or even of a child ; and as I dreaded answering openly my friend, I had at first recourse to a little equivocation. I declared that it was only right to spend one day with Mansfield whose cellar like his family was one of the best and oldest in the country—that we had plenty of time to spare for such a purpose, and indeed it was on that account I had left

the Hall in such an abrupt manner. Foster who knew my disposition by this time quite as well as my affairs, was not to be deceived by this from perceiving that it was my newly awakened love for Eliza which influenced my conduct; nor indeed did he fail to tell me so, and expostulate against my placing myself into a temptation which I might not withstand, and thereby lose a fortune I had so lately come into possession of.

“God knows,” said he, “however much I might lose by such a step, that is the very last reason which influences your faithful friend. I can return with as light a heart as ever to my former drudgery; but bitterly should I regret to see you in the pride of health and youth deliberately cast from you, one of the noblest boons fantastical Fortune ever flung to any individual. Consider Butler, those dawning prospects of glory and ambition which are opening out to you; and let neither love nor any other motive divert your steps from advancing to true greatness.”

“It is useless Foster, attempting to conceal anything from you; and I may therefore con-

fess that your surmises are well founded. I have long loved, and ever must love that all-perfect woman; yes, to destruction love her: nor could thrice the riches I possess be put into competition with that feeling. You may call this infatuation, madness, folly, what you will; but you cannot gainsay the conviction of my heart which tells me, it is the fervid purity of the truest and most ardent love. And what my friend is there to compare with such an inestimable feeling—what price is too precious for the purchase of such perfection as Eliza! you have never seen her, and can, therefore form no estimate of her value: when you know her you will say that the sacrifice which I possibly may make for her is great; but at the same time admit, that if any of her sex be worthy of it she is. Nor think that I see this question differently from yourself, if it be looked upon merely as one of money; for I can assure you that there is no other woman upon earth who could influence me so as to make any serious sacrifice, but as to Eliza, my first and only love, she alone holds my wretched destinies,—I am utterly at her mercy, and in

making any sacrifice for her, I should feel a joy in proportion to its greatness ; for I know her to be worthy of all and every thing the man who wishes to possess her can himself possess. I have however, said enough ; to reason on such topics is like reasoning on the sensations of a sense which we do not enjoy—you must be a *lover* yourself e'er my arguments can penetrate or convince."

" This, my dear friend," cried Foster, " may possibly do for the figments of romance, or the equally great improbabilities of the sock and buskin ; but let me tell you, it will be called down-right insanity by the real money minding world, or even by the prudent proportion of the community. Believe me, there is as great Quixotism in love and gallantry as in knight errantry—there is a medium in every thing, not excepting virtue (if I speak not profanely) and as happiness in this world depends much upon the harmony which subsists betwixt ourselves and the rest of our species, we never take a step likely to encrease it when we act directly contrary to its usages or maxims. I advance this opinion even supposing that with respect to your own, you are

are acting nobly ; for, I would ask you, have not all the best and wisest men who have lived, been persecuted, not so much on account of their actions or doctrines being considered unsound, but because they flouted the humdrum routine of life of those whom prudence had induced to stick to the ways of the *commune pecus*. I shall however say no more, than that it behoves you to ponder well upon so serious a matter ; and remember, that it is no paltry pension, no inconsiderable salary you must for ever resign ; but a princely residence and an income free and unfettered of nearly sixteen thousand a year.”

“ The more the better ;” said I, “ consider what the noble Antony resigned. But here we are at the Parsonage and as I intend staying some time, I must endeavour to explain to Dr. Tomkins my reasons the best way I can.”

If the worthy clergyman was surprised at seeing me return in rather high spirits, he was still more so when I opened to him my wish to become his boarder for a few weeks ; and although he was delighted with this plan, yet

would he not hear of it unless I came as a guest. To this however I would not consent; and I refused to avail myself of his civility unless he left entirely to myself the making any recompense I might think proper. This being satisfactorily arranged, and our carriage ordered from the inn where we had left it, I sat down and wrote letters to the Marquis of—— as also to my constituents expressing my regret at being unable to stand for the county—a step which of course convinced Foster that I was resolved to prosecute my designs upon Eliza, and gave him infinite concern.

My impatience for the morrow was equal to that of a captive whose imprisonment ends by break of day; nor did sound slumber lend its aid in consuming the tedious time; for it happened that I lay in the very same little chamber I formerly occupied; the bed and furniture of which were the same, and naturally suggested many reminiscences. The last time I had lain upon that bed, it was to spend a restless and miserable night in musing on the utter hoplessness of my state, and the improbability

of my ever again seeing her I loved ; I now turned impatiently on its pillow from the prospect of again beholding her.

We were at the Lodge betimes, and found Mansfield walking in the shrubbery. He received us with his customary kindness and urbanity ; and after shewing us around the gardens which were in much better order than I expected to find them, he began to expatiate on those legal afflictions which had befallen him, to defray the expenses of which, he had been compelled to cut some of the finest timber on his property. I managed to lead him from this mortifying topic whilst he led us to the house, and by the time we reached the drawing-room he had just finished his favourite lines of Thomson, and with them dismissed as usual the subject from his mind. My eyes immediately past through the apartment in expectation of seeing Eliza, but it was empty.

“ I am sorry Mr. Butler,” said Mansfield, “ that our medical attendant will not hear of Mrs. Curry coming down stairs ; she will however be glad to see you in her own parlour, and

I will send to acquaint her of your being here."

This was quickly done; and in a few minutes the servant having returned saying that Mrs. Curry would be happy to receive me, I without venturing a look either at Foster or her father followed mechanically the female who had brought the message. I found Eliza reclining languidly on a couch, enveloped in one or two splendid Indian shawls; and as the door closed upon us she stretched out her hand towards me without speaking: yet was there an eloquent welcome in her dark eyes, which she however immediately covered with a handkerchief to conceal the tears which rushed plentifully into them. In the meanwhile her hand remained clasped in mine, nor could I resist pressing it to my trembling lips.

It was some time before either of us found utterance; nor was it requisite, for words would have been but poor expositors of such a burst of feeling as then thrilled through both our souls. But how much had we to talk over when once the ice was broken!—It appeared

that a very few weeks after I left India, Mr. Curry had been carried off by a fever; and so suddenly, that he had no time to arrange his affairs: the consequence of which, as Mansfield had told me, was a law suit betwixt him and his daughter on one side, and Curry's heirs at law on the other. But what grieved me most to hear, was, that ever since Eliza's return to England, she had been afflicted by a severe cold, which had confined her to the house, and at times threatened to end in a pulmonary affection.

On hearing this, I gazed upon her slightly flushed cheek and animated eye, as one would read that page of the book of Fate containing his own destinies; and the terror of consumption smote my heart with a chillness which nothing but a dread of Eliza's perceiving, enabled me to conceal.

The creaking dinner bell had already twice rung; and I at length reluctantly obeyed its summons, after obtaining permission that we should all take coffee in her parlour, provided that she felt strong enough to receive us.

This was a vast relief to Mansfield, who was

a most orthodox person respecting dinner, and always punctual to five minutes in that important particular ; and I found him parading the dining room in somewhat an impatient mood, with his watch in his hand, and the first course smoking savourily on the board. Having dispatched a plain substantial dinner, for my friend was one who abhorred most made dishes (which he designated kick shaws,) he treated us to some claret of such a delicious flavour, that I am convinced the modern vines have lost their power of communicating any thing equal or similar. I need scarcely say that a cup of coffee up stairs would nevertheless have been to me much more agreeable ; and it was with considerable regret I perceived, that my sincere encomiums on the wine was the means of ordaining a third bottle to be drawn, and which took at least three quarters of an hour in being depleted.

Mansfield expressed himself highly pleased with my intention of spending some days at the Parsonage ; and gave us a free invitation to his house, *sans cérémonie*, a piece of politeness of which I resolved fully to avail myself.

At length we obtained permission to repair to Mrs. Curry's parlour, where coffee was served up; and that evening was one of the happiest of my life. Before I had made many more visits to the Lodge, it is needless to say that I had become riveted in my former bondage; and I was perhaps more than ever inflamed by this fascinating woman, from the reflection that there was apparently now no serious obstacle to our union. It was impossible for me to be long in Eliza's presence without declaring my passion, and imploring her to reward a constancy which even her marriage had never shaken; and it would have been affectation or hypocrisy on her part (after all that had passed betwixt us) had she not with some confusion admitted, that she had dreaded such a declaration.

To my surprise and disappointment however, she positively refused to engage herself. Her reasons for this, though exceedingly unconvincing to me, were I must say dictated by the most delicate and disinterested motives.

“ The sacrifices,” said she “ which you contemplate making are sufficient to flatter any female’s vanity; yes and to convince me, were any

such proof wanting, of the sincerity of your affection; but in my present unconfirmed state of health, I feel, that I should make but an unworthy return for such unexampled generosity, were I to accept of your proposals. Were I to linger long as a wretched invalid, what pleasure could you possibly expect from such a union? I should feel that I was a burden upon your life—an odious incumbrance, for which, in the heat of passion, you had recklessly relinquished all the bright allurements of wealth, society, and liberty.

“ No, Butler, I will never consent to act so selfish a part; to refuse, is often as great a proof of pure love, as to grant is one of weakness or imbecility.”

To this I with earnestness answered, that my proposal (as Eliza herself must well know) was far from being the effect of a momentary admiration; and that my love for her, though partially smothered by her alliance with Curry had never been stifled. I besought her to remember that she was incorporated with the very essence of my thought and feeling; and that were I to live a thousand years, I should still enter-

tain the same devotional sentiments towards her; and erred finally, I assured her, that she in supposing that there was any sacrifice on my part; for without her, every thing on earth was utterly of no value, and even life itself would become an insupportable burden.

Eliza listened patiently to a lengthened pleading, the gist of which I have here included; but her resolution was taken: and although she promised never to be another's, yet, to plight herself to marry me before her health was fully restored, she pertinaciously refused.

By degrees I became resigned to this determination, which I could not help regarding as the proof of a noble disposition; and Eliza rose, if possible, still higher in my esteem:—she was, to me actually an idol; for I worshipped her perfections in secret, and she alone engrossed my mind. With her consent, I took an early opportunity of acquainting Mr. Mansfield of my intentions; and as I had expected, found him perfectly satisfied with the prospect of having me for a son-in-law.

“I assure you,” said he, “the only thing which could induce me to express a disappro-

bation of the honour you intend my family, is the tremendous sacrifice of property which, in obedience to your uncle's strange will you cannot avoid making.

“ Mrs. Curry is now of sufficient years and experience to judge for herself in a matter of such importance as matrimony ; and were she otherwise, I can only say Mr. Butler, that you should receive every encouragement on my part ; for it has been my constant maxim, to direct or interfere as little as possible, with the choice of my daughters in such matters.”

In the mean time I had despatched Foster to London, in order to take the opinion of counsel respecting my uncle's testament, as to the manner in which it would be interpreted ; for I was of course anxious to know, whether, with the exception of a thousand per annum, the remainder of my income would devolve on the Lumleys the very instant that I married ; or only from the end of the term allowed me for fulfilling its provisions. It appeared that there was but little doubt but the will would be construed to my advantage ; and, as I knew that with perfect ease, I could by careful economy

save somewhere about thirteen thousand a year, the future destination of the property gave me very little concern.

Thus far had my prospects prospered; and nothing now was wanting but the will of God, to render me supremely happy. He however, whose universal plans can never alter for the fleeting phantasies of such an insect as man, had ruled it otherwise; and now, in the sedate sorrow of my soul can I utter—what then I could not, “Thy will be done.”

Alas! the fine summer days, instead of invigorating the frame of my beautiful and kind-hearted Eliza (as I had fancied they would) only ripened the grass which grew over her grave; and she withered away like a fair flower, which has unfortunately been too quickly forced in a conservatory. Her death was no useless struggle with the stern destroyer, but all was placidity, and resignation, and charity. She had never sinned—even in thought; her spirit was as spotless, aye, as an angel of light; and, with a bloom on her transparent cheek, and a heaven in her eyes which death himself durst not desecrate, Eliza calmly yet confidently, appeared before her God.

To the last, like many who in that fallacious path of death which is smooth as the turf of an Italian glade when flowers begin to shoot through its bosom ; Eliza believed from the absence of suffering that all would yet be well, and that years of happiness were in store for us. I, however, thought differently, even from the first ; and many agonizing hours I spent, endeavouring to appear as sanguine as herself, when, in reality, my heart was bleeding with despair.

All that medical advice could do, was of course done ; but what is art in such cases, but a miserable mockery and hallucination ? It is like an emmet pulling with its puny mandibles against the foot of an unconscious giant ; or a vain mortal ordering the awful ocean to retire from before him.

I was not permitted to see Eliza expire ; though I implored, upon my knees, that I might not be separated from her ; and I believe that my grief might have carried me to some violent extremity but for Foster, who watched me as if he had been my keeper. Every kindness and attention it is possible for one being to show another in distress, was shown me by Mansfield, Foster, and Tomkins ; but it was lost upon me,

for I was hardly conscious of their solicitude : nor did I experience any assuagement of my misery until I fell into a lethargic melancholy, and an apathy to every thing which those who have once experienced never have a probability of forgetting, inasmuch as it is rarely overcome.

For twenty-four hours after Eliza's death, I acted the part of a maniac ; and it was a matter of great satisfaction to my friends to find that I eventually lapsed into that calm state of despondency which promised a possibility of reconciliation to my loss. But for this, Mansfield never would have assented to my urgent request to be permitted, unattended, to indulge in one last look at the corpse of her who was to have been my wife ; a request, which being considered as far from unreasonable, the Squire complied with, presenting me with the key of the chambers, in which she was laid out ; for, fearing that in any violent mood, I might have made such an attempt, he had prudently taken every precaution against it. Mansfield led the way ; and unlocking the door of Eliza's bed-room, remained in the parlour which opened from it, until I should have indulged my sorrow.

With a fluttering hand I carefully opened the door, as if I had been afraid of awaking one asleep ; and entering, found myself in a spacious darkened chamber, and close to the foot of a bed, the interior of which I could not however see, for a screen, which had purposely been placed betwixt the bed and a window that was partially open.

I made a pause before I durst come forth from behind this screen ; and whilst I did so, thought I saw the head of the bed slightly agitated, which motion was accompanied by a slight rustling noise. Though considerably startled by this at first, I had nevertheless sufficient reflection devoted to external objects to perceive, that one of the windows was open ; and that this was unquestionably occasioned by the current of air introduced suddenly into the apartment by the door being opened : I therefore advanced to withdraw the still-looking shroud from the features of my beloved, when a sight met my eyes, which, for an instant froze the very blood in my veins, making my flesh creep as if it would have parted from my very bones.

Crouching on the partially bared breast of

Eliza, sat a jet black cat, the yellow dilated eyes of which dazzled suspiciously up in my face from an uncertainty of my intentions ; whilst at the same time it licked its lips, yet moist and red from its revolting and newly-finished repast upon the right cheek of my adored one, a great portion of which was literally devoured or lacerated in a manner too appalling for description. God forbid I should attempt it !

Such was the horrible spectacle that met my eyes ; and all I am afterwards conscious of, was the uttering a piercing shriek—springing like a panther at the hell-sent demon, and falling horridly on my temple with a dizzy sensation. If it be strange that “ a harp of thousand strings should be so long in tune,” as has been beautifully said of the human frame, much more marvellous has it appeared to me on frequent reflection, that my reason was able to recover from the rude jar of that most dreadful hour.

Such an hour !

CHAPTER VIII.

" Tut man, one fire burns out another's burning,
One pain is lessened by another's anguish ;
Turn giddy and be helped by backward turning,
One desperate grief cure with another's languish :
Take thou some new infection to the eye,
And the rank poison of the old will die."

Romeo and Juliet.

I FEEL assured that no one will blame me for dwelling as briefly as possible, upon the conclusion of this hapless passion which has run like a thread of the blackest die through the whole motley web of my existence ; it is indeed, sufficient to say, that I lay for some weeks at the Lodge dangerously ill ; and

had I not lost a large quantity of blood by a severe cut which I received on my temple in falling against the edge of a toilet, it was the surgeon's opinion that I might have burst a blood-vessel, from the extreme excitement under which I must have laboured. Yet even this copious bleeding did not prevent my being seized with a slow fever, from which it was a long time before I was pronounced sufficiently recovered to be able to travel.

When this was the case, I took an affectionate leave of Mansfield, Miss Grizzle, and the worthy parson; into whose hands I forced a letter containing some remuneration for his kindness and hospitality; and set off with the intention of reaching town by three or four easy journeys. Scarcely however, were we out of sight of the Parsonage, when instead of taking the high-road, I ordered the postilion to drive to —— Church, in order that I might see where they had deposited Eliza's remains, for I need scarcely say that I was absent from her funeral.

I have previously given a slight sketch of this rustic place of worship when every thing

connected with it was blank, dreary, and disable; but on the present occasion, it was as different as youth from age, or the opposed seasons: for there was a calm brightness diffused over nature, which rendered the most insignificant things striking or beautiful; and every glittering beam bore upon its wings a benignant blessing. Those towering and majestic limes which I had last seen black and spungy, exuding as it were noisome rheums, without a withered leaf upon their heads, now stood with their long verdant sprays floating in the pure and gentle zephyr as gracefully as the plumes of some fair tropic bird; whilst the antiquated church-roof, with its many tinted and irregular flags, formed betwixt them just such a quiet picturesque back ground as the eye loves to rest on.

Of all this I took little note; but alighting, entered the enclosure, followed by Foster, and directed my steps towards a decrepid old person clad in rusty black velveteen, whose occupation was easily discoverable by a bright well-worn spade which he carried, or rather used as a walking staff to steady his tottering steps.

This venerable sexton on being questioned by me as to the spot I was in search of, lifted his ragged hat from over his sunken eyes, and after indulging in an unceremonious stare, muttered the name of Mansfield, and then led the way at the same sedate pace to an angle of the ancient edifice.

“ That’s the Mansfield vault ;” said he, striking with his spade the iron railings of a spacious enclosure or safe, “ and was opened about a month ago to bury one of the family, though I take it you know that by coming to look at it.”

I took no notice of his words, but asked for the key ; this however, was in Mansfield’s possession ; otherwise should I have entered, and thrown myself on the cold broad stone which lay invidiously on the beloved bosom of her who was to have been my wife. Foster, with his usual delicacy, left me to indulge my grief, and withdrew with him the grave-digger ; whilst I leaning my forehead on the rails, paid the vain unappreciated tribute of my tears and groans to the memory of Eliza’s virtues and affection. At length, I permitted myself to

be led to the carriage by my friend, who, deeply sympathised in this out-pouring of an overburdened spirit.

After being the unfortunate means of for ever depriving myself of the companionship of my lamented friend Wyndham, I had believed it impossible for me again to form such another friendship; yet the more I saw of Foster's warm heartedness and honourable principles, the nearer did he replace Alfred in my affections. With all his flightiness and natural vivacity, Foster had a considerable share of sound sense, which had been pretty well schooled by a long acquaintance with adversity; and he on that account possessed a much greater stock of worldly prudence and self-control, than what was to be expected from either his years or disposition. Had Foster been born to a rich inheritance he had unquestionably been seduced into extravagance and dissipation; as it was, he could do a generous or sportive thing without being prodigal, or a prudent one without its savouring of meanness.

Such a person, putting aside his agreeable

companionship, was therefore to me an invaluable acquisition; and I found this more especially the case after Eliza's death, for I then became shamefully negligent in looking after my affairs, and but for Foster's honesty and assiduity, I might have been plundered to a very great extent. My sudden determination not to stand for the county, and non-appearance at the Marquis of ——— after setting out with the intention of paying him my personal respects, caused considerable speculation amongst my friends; and more especially the Lumley's, who were always on the watch to learn my movements and pursuits. Their curiosity regarding me was indeed natural enough, seeing the interest which they had either in my death or marriage; and by tampering with my servants, as well as through other sources, they managed to learn every particular connected with my matrimonial intentions.

This threw them into a prodigious ecstasy, which however as suddenly vanished on hearing of Mrs. Curry's death, as a soap bubble after assuming many resplendent hues bursts into some-

thing very similar to that of the spittle of the dirty nosed boy, by whose lips and tobacco pipe its beauties have been engendered. Their disappointment was nevertheless cheered, by a distant hope that as my heart was so susceptible, it was not impossible that I might yet be ensnared by some seducing and untitled fair one, and so lose possession of my property.

Eliza had now been dead three years, and I had tried every thing that money or interest could do to assuage my remembrance of her ; but if the pursuits of pleasure are vain and unsatisfactory, how much more so are those for affording tranquillity to a disturbed mind ! I found that there is no fictitious solace for its sores, but that they must run till the whole fabric be sapless or decayed. I also felt a conviction stronger than what the appeals of the most inspired poetry, or the dogmas of the sublimest philosophy could afford, namely that however intimate the union of mind and body may be, their natures are as essentially different as light from darkness, or heat from cold.

Enquire not the opinion of that man who would endeavour to persuade himself of the grovelling materialism of his God-born soul, when he is surrounded by every thing which the luxuriousness of the heart can covet or command. No ! 'tis when you find him preyed upon by solemn sorrow ; with disappointment, disease, poverty and contumely for his bosom companions, and the pertinacious parasites of his bed and board—'tis then I wish you who waver in your conclusions to mark carefully his conduct and his creed—I feel fully satisfied that you will find that *man* as much changed in opinion, as in circumstance ; and I have moreover observed, that the most over-weening speculators into the mysteries of his nature, besides being nursed the greater part of their lives in the lap of luxury or ease, have seldom experienced any powerful emotions—their minds, however polished or enlightened, have rarely been more rudely shaken by passion, than are the sails of a sluggish canal-boat by a land breeze, compared with those of an Indiaman in the awful and irresistible rush of the Typhaun.

Such men too in spite of their belief, (if it be not a delusion or a mockery so to call it) a belief which ought to nerve them against every solicitude and apprehension regarding futurity, are strangely fearful of death—and this I can only account for by the observation I have just made; for death, its approach, prospects, (and I might add its uncertain issues) are the only filaments by which their phlegmatic spirits can, and in most cases must be aroused from their false slumber. They then turn a deaf ear to every rhetoric but one; and that one is the humble whisperings of a monitor which has perhaps, been too seldom attended to; and experience a dim sensation of pangs which I and millions of others have known, a thousand times more poignant than Death arrayed in all his horrors; though from the clayey nature of their constitution, they never can have any perception of those fleeting feelings which have also flickered athwart my spirit—sweet as snatches of a blessed immortality.

But to return to myself; I repeat that it was in vain I attempted to drown all remembrance

of the hapless Eliza ; I found a want of excitement either in business or in pleasure ; for me there was no Lethe to afford even a sprinkling of oblivion ; nor yet a Phlegethon to inflame. I could have rushed into the thickest fury of a hard contested battle in quest of a brief buringishing of the spirit—or at other times with a firm hand and rational deliberation have emancipated myself from the irksome bondage of life. Nor is there any particular emotion of the mind, to which I can now attribute the non-performance of an impious act to which my thoughts so frequently reverted ; for assuredly, it was neither a dread of eternity, nor a fondness for existence, which then prevented its execution.

I had long intended making a tour on the continent, but had always been prevented by apathy and laziness ; I now however resolved on putting my plan in practise. Before my preparations were fully made, I received a very kind invitation to spend a few days with my cousins the Lumleys ; and this by Foster's advice I accepted, having no good excuse to make, and there being no likelihood of my again seeing them for some years. I confess

that after the character I had given of the Lumleys to my friend, I was considerably surprised at his recommending me to pay them this visit; being then ignorant, that Foster himself had an attraction in that quarter in the person of a Miss Mulgrave, who it appeared was also invited there, and by his description was nothing less than a paragon of perfection.

As for myself, it may be believed that I accepted of the invitation from no respect either for the Captain or his sister; but merely to show the world, that I alike despised its opinion, and cherished neither jealousy nor ill will towards those, whose future interests it was in my power to affect most seriously by a personal sacrifice. I had besides this another reason, occasioned by my vanity; namely, that should it ever be necessary for me to make over my estates to the Lumleys, it would be better and less mortifying to do so with every semblance of choice and free good will, rather than be considered as an upstart who had never been able to obtain such a distinguished partner as my uncle had presumptuously required for me.

Such were the motives which influenced me,

and off we set for the residence of my cousins, which was a large brick building with a stucco front, in the neighbourhood of Richmond, and beautifully situated near the Thames.

We were of course received, with every demonstration of joy and hospitality; and either on purpose to meet us, or by accident, there was a party of six or seven persons, one of whom proved to be a very old acquaintance. This was Miss Witherspoon, the Aunt of Agnes Landon, (as will be remembered,) whose tall, gaunt frame, and harsh features had suffered no more change since I last saw them, than if they had been really formed of that bronze the colour of which they so much resembled.—I had a great dread of being introduced to this eccentric old lady, conceiving that she could never have forgotten or forgiven my ferocious assault upon her feline favourites; nor above all, the more lamentable affray with poor Wyndham. But to my extreme satisfaction I found that all-erasing Time had acted towards me a friendly part in the estimation of Miss Witherspoon, for she received me with unfeigned kindness, appearing more to compassionate, than blame my

misfortunes, by which conduct she gave me an equally high opinion of her judgment as her heart ; and to say the truth with all her peculiarities she was of a kind and charitable disposition.

Instead therefore of feeling embarrassed, I found myself quite easy in her company; and in the course of conversation I even ventured to relate every particular respecting the melancholy fate of my unfortunate friend : whilst from Miss Witherspoon I learnt that shortly after my return from India, Colonel Landon had retired from the service with a handsome independency, and that his daughter had since married Sir John d'Eville who was then at Pisa on account of his health. The rest of the visitors consisted of a Mr. George Mulgrave and his sister, (Foster's flame) who was indeed as engaging and beautiful a young creature as ever my eyes beheld ; a young clergyman, who by his cut and talk was clearly a fox-hunter, and a rake ; and two sedate young maidens of the name of Roper.

Such a party was not likely to prove much more delightful than the one in the parlour,

which sat, “all silent and all d—d,” save perhaps to Foster; considering that there was amusement to be concocted for five ladies by only four gentlemen; of whom one was altogether taken up by his thoughts of the most lovely of the bevy, and another, myself, all dull and sullen was sufficient to clog the very wheels of the chariot of the God of Humour. But to make matters worse, it so happened either for the purpose of trying the firmness of my heart, or withholding any encouragement from Foster, that the Lumleys took every legitimate means of bringing me into an acquaintance with the beautiful Miss Mulgrave. I handed her down to dinner—was civilly induced to dance with her more than once in the evening, and in short, thrown a hundred times into such conjunctions and juxtapositions, as subtle and experienced matchmakers know perfectly how to produce. Nor did I find the least fault with all this, further than that I engrossed too much of the young lady from Foster who looked very sulky; for Miss Mulgrave herself was a most agreeable companion, being both

witty and sensible: qualifications as rarely conjoined to beauty, as in the feathered race is a gorgeous plumage accompanied by a voice of melting melody.

Although I saw through the measures of my obliging cousins, instead of acting the mulish, I felt piqued as to my gallantry; and was resolved to show the Lumleys, that I knew how to appreciate the excellencies of the sex by being attentive to so fine a woman, and that if my heart was unfortunately incapable of forming another attachment, it was not therefore petrified into a want of all perception of the beautiful and bewitching.

Poor Foster was the one least satisfied by my proceedings, for flattering himself that he knew fully my disposition, (which he never did) he believed from my acting so extreme a part with respect to Eliza that I might again be as suddenly captivated; and the dread of Miss Mulgrave being the syren destined to subdue me threw him into unspeakable distress, for although he had as yet made no declarations of love he had fairly fallen a martyr to its sway

and was impressed with the conviction that Miss Mulgrave herself entertained a corresponding passion.

Accordingly, the next day at dinner, I perceived him seated beside one of the Miss Ropers as grumpy and frumpish as a man who has just heard of his being a bankrupt; whilst the Lumleys in the highest glee chattered and smiled to their other guests, pretending not to notice a conversation which had for some time been carried on betwixt me and Miss Mulgrave with considerable animation.

The subject was indeed an interesting one, for it was respecting Miss Landon with whom she had been at school. I must here do Miss Mulgrave the injustice to affirm, that I at first believed her to have been knowingly brought there as a sort of matrimonial decoy duck; and I had therefore no compunction in flirting a little in order to repay her with her own current coin. To my surprise however, although intelligent and sarcastic, Miss Mulgrave was as cold as ice, and lost no opportunity of parrying every thing like flattery; and though I attributed this to the presence of Foster, there was

ever and anon something like an attempt on her part to throw off this reserve, all which savoured so strongly of *coquetterie* that I felt fairly puzzled what to make of her. It struck me that however sprightly Miss Mulgrave might naturally be, her vivacity and communicativeness were often assumed to cover some unusual seriousness or apprehension of me; and it was indeed clear that she acted under some guidance, restraint, or ill concealed repulsion. This did not fail to corroborate the unworthy suspicion, that she had been brought there in league with the Lumleys to make a bold assault upon my heart; and yet the general coldness of her manner, shewed little symptoms of such a design on her part. The more studied, not to say assiduous my attentions were, the more distant and forbidding grew this fascinating young creature; and perceiving plainly that my politeness occasioned uneasiness, if not pain, I endeavoured to dismiss the suspicion I had formed respecting the young lady's motives, and studied to avoid coming into further collision with her.

It will be supposed, that the sagacious Miss

Lumley took especial care to frustrate as much as possible this charitable intention ; and that very evening, I was again introduced to her as a partner for a quadrille in such a manner that rudeness only could have got me off. There was a blankness in the face of poor Foster, who with one of the long mopresembling Miss Ropers formed our *vis-à-vis*, as his eye furtively watched me engaged in earnest conversation with his dulcinea ; and I have little doubt that every one in the room who noticed us, must have observed something very inexplicable or confused in my countenance, when Miss Mulgrave, whose features were suffused by a blush thus addressed me—

“ Mr. Butler,” said she, “ I have anxiously waited for an opportunity of having some confidential conversation with you, but I have been narrowly watched by those for whose ears it is not intended.”

Here she was interrupted by the sideling approach of her brother, and could not then further explain herself, whilst my attention was called to the part I had to perform in the figure of which I was profoundly ignorant. This

piece of awkward inattention on my part, did not escape the eyes of the ladies, more especially Miss Lumley's and I saw several expressive looks and titters interchanged which added as much to the confusion of Miss Mulgrave as myself.

I was heartily pleased when the set was finished, and leading my partner to a chair, which seemed pretty secure against eaves dropers, requested her to explain what it was she wished to entrust to me.

"I am sure," said she, "you will consider my behaviour as unreasonable, if not indelicate ; but I trust to be hereafter, able to vindicate myself, for I have something of great importance to disclose concerning you.

"But here comes Miss Lumley," continued she in a hurried manner, "take as little notice of me as possible—be up to-morrow morning earlier than you were to-day, and I will meet you either in the garden or the drawing-room, —but say not a syllable of this to any one."

As she ended this, she tripped away towards Miss Witherspoon, evidently to avoid Miss Lumley, who commenced persecuting me

with some insipid observations, to which I paid no manner of attention.

When I was left to myself, I began to ponder upon this strange communication ; and all I could make out of it was, that this matter of great importance must be Foster's passion for Miss Mulgrave. The advice, to take as little notice of her as possible, and say not a syllable to any one, could only apply to my friend; who, fired by jealousy, had, I suspected, taken umbrage at my attentions, and was likely to be a pertinacious spy upon the young lady's proceedings. The disclosure therefore, was as I fully expected,—her love for Foster ; a delicate subject certainly, and of the greatest consequence to all ladies ; and one which, as they never disclose without some weighty reasons, I in vain, endeavoured to guess what there could be in Miss Mulgrave's case to induce her to make me the confidant of so delicate a secret. I accordingly was upon the whole, pretty well prepared for the appointed interview, and anticipated considerable pleasure in being the first to assure Foster that love's labour had not been altogether lost on his part.

It was a fine summer's morning, and that is, or ought to be, a sufficient reason for every man's springing from a slothful bed. We all grumble at the brevity of life, even Theophrastus, the sage and venerable successor of Aristotle, who himself reached the term of a hundred and seven years, grumbled at leaving life when he was just beginning to learn; and that harts and crows should outnumber the days of an intelligent being. And yet how many months nay years, of priceless time, do we bury in the grave ! for what is slumber but the type and monitor of the tomb ? “ Death and his brother sleep !”

However, it was a fine morning, which is as much as to say that Phœbus, like some mighty king, had flung from around him his gorgeous curtains of gold and crimson ; whilst his glory, after enveloping ocean and its thousand fleets and isles, burnished at length the placid bosom of the noble Thames, gladdening into pastoral song all vocal nature.

The merry milk maids were singing in the yellow and dewy meads, and tinkling their empty cans in chorus ; whilst the cattle they

were bent on plundering, lowed towards them a long welcome which resounded through the leafy groves that hid a thousand sprightly choristers. All were hidden in their umbrageous bowers, save the lark, who in his clear native skies rose, and fell, and fluttered, like the delicious notes of his own uninterrupted strain.

There were, moreover, several wherries glancing noiselessly along in different directions, with a rapidity which showed that the sinews of the lusty rowers were fresh and ready for a long day's toil.

Such was the view with which I amused myself for nearly an hour, walking up and down a flowery terrace, which overhung the river, and where Pope himself might have sat when he wrote these lines :

“ Here hills and vales, the woodland and the plain,
Here earth and water seem to strive again,
Not chaos-like together crushed and bruised—
But as the world harmoniously confused ;
Where order in variety we see,
And where—tho' all things differ, all agree.
Here waving groves a chequered scene display,
And part admit, and part exclude the day ;

As some coy nymph her lover's warm address,
Nor quite indulges nor can quite repress.
There interspersed in lawns and opening glades
Thin trees arise that shun each other's shades.
Here in full light the russet plains extend ;
Here wrapt in clouds the blueish hills ascend."

After enjoying this lovely prospect, and the balmy breath of morn for nearly one hour without seeing any thing of Miss Mulgrave, I repaired to the drawing-room ; but had not been there many minutes before she entered. I immediately advanced, and taking her hand, wished her good morning ; and, as there was some trepidation discernable in her countenance, I thought myself bound to relieve her if possible, by commencing the conversation.

" You see, Miss Mulgrave," said I, " that like a true and humble knight, I am always found at my post, and obedient to the bidding of the fair ; and I assure you I have scarce slept a wink for guessing what this important secret can be which you so kindly inconvenience yourself to divulge."

" I shall not waste time in complimenting your punctuality, Mr. Butler," replied she,

looking warily around to see that there were no listeners, "but endeavour to explain what I have to say as plainly and succinctly as possible. I must, however, express some surprise that you should not, ere this, have recognized me."

I now took a hasty scrutiny of Miss Mulgrave's face, which, being suffused with a modest blush, heightened by the freshness of the morning, looked exceedingly beautiful : yet could I not tax my memory with having ever before seen it. I was attempting to excuse my forgetfulness when she interrupted me.—

"I perceive Sir, that you really do not remember me ; nor, on reconsideration, need I be so much astonished, for you must indeed have been blinded by madness or rage, when you fell so unmercifully on my poor unoffending cat and murdered it before my very eyes. Such a terrible shock as I received ! I assure you Sir, it was several days before I recovered from the nervous effects of my terror; nor do I think myself now altogether safe in the company of one so susceptible of outrageous passions."

To my inexpressible shame and confusion,

I immediately recognized the elegant mien and figure of the lovely poetess, for I had never obtained a fair view of her features ; and after explaining the overpowering *antipathy* I entertained towards cats, and the many misfortunes which had on that account befallen me, I trusted she would not only grant me her forgiveness, but drown in oblivion the whole transactions of that dreadful day.

“ Oh, Mr. Butler,” replied she, “ you may satisfy yourself that a syllable on that subject has never, nor ever will escape my lips. I esteemed the fright I got, as but a fitting punishment for the indelicate, or at least, imprudent step I took in visiting one to whom I was utterly unknown ; and with such a vain and silly motive ! I moreover assure you that were my brother to know I had ever obtained or solicited a private interview with any one whatsoever, (more especially yourself,) he would then have a much stronger reason for exerting his malicious intentions respecting me than he now has. I must, however, endeavour to collect my flurried senses, and enter on that matter for which I have requested this meeting ; were I found

here it would only make matters worse, as you yourself will presently understand and admit."

Believing this alluded to Foster, who was every bit as early a riser as myself, I bowed, and said: "Let Miss Mulgrave proceed, she shall receive no interruption; and if there be any thing confidential which she chuses to entrust to me, I pledge the faith of a gentleman, she shall never find any reason to repent of her trust."

"It is confidential," continued the lady, "only as far as I am concerned. But how to commence my story, I know not—would to heaven you could guess or suspect the reason of my visiting these odious Lumleys; it would then render it less improbable, and easier told."

"Indeed, Miss Mulgrave, I durst venture no surmise on the subject; for with the exception of Miss Witherspoon, and my friend Foster, I know little or nothing of any one here; not even excepting the Lumleys, who are my relations."

This allusion to Foster, I purposely made in order to break the ice, and pave the way to that declaration, which I believed to be playing upon the tip of her tongue.

"Had a favourable opportunity of speaking to Mr. Foster presented itself," replied the lady, "I had avoided the necessity of this interview; but, as I last night told you, I have been watched most strictly; and am, much against my inclinations, little better than a puppet in the hands of those who are your enemies."

"Mine, madam! Foster's, I suppose, you mean."

"No, Sir," replied she, with some confusion, "my business is with you; I know little, very little of Mr. Foster, nor am I aware that there are any here who either love or hate him."

"You surprise me, Miss Mulgrave; how can you possibly have any interest in my concerns; or who can I have injured or offended!"

"Patience Sir! and maintain but for a few minutes your promise of not interrupting me, and all shall be satisfactorily explained."

I again bowed, which she, without noticing, continued—

"You are doomed, Mr. Butler, either to marry a lady of rank, or lose in a few years your noble fortune."

I bowed without answering.

"Well, now, supposing you were goose

enough to marry me, would not that be a capital thing—nay, let not my plainness terrify you, as if I were a Circe or Medea ; for as there is nothing impossible in the thing (further than that I never will have you) so is it not wonderful that I might have been brought here for the furtherance of such a plan on the part of these Lumleys, and my brother ; of whom and his flagitious designs you shall hear more anon.”

I was so much astonished by the boldness of this address, which but for the charming and somewhat playful bashfulness with which it was spoken, could scarcely have appeared otherwise than unfeminine ; that I forbore interrupting her even by a single ejaculation.

“ You must know, Mr. Butler, that my brother is one of the most unprincipled libertines in England ; being a gambler, always in debt, difficulty, or some disturbance, and one who will I fear lend himself to any plan, however desperate, for the sake of that money which is so indispensable for his extravagance. Now, from a few words which I heard pass betwixt Captain Lumley and George, I am assured that

they contemplate carrying into execution, a plan which is almost too base for suspicion or belief ; nor should I venture to divulge it, were it not for the almost positive assurance I have of its existence, and that I am desirous to clear myself from any supposed participation in their crimes.”

“ Proceed, Miss Mulgrave,” said I, “ nor imagine, whatever this conspiracy may prove to be, that I shall form any unworthy estimate of your character.”

“ I hope so,” continued the young lady, with some agitation, “ for not only am I innocent, but incur great danger from my brother’s violence, by making this discovery. I have little doubt then, that the design of Lumley, in conjunction with my brother, (who lately lost a large sum to the Captain at play), is to induce you to shew me as much attention as possible ; so that my brother may come forward, and demand your intentions. If he does this, he will be sure to find some means of picking a quarrel with you ; in which case, you can have but little or no chance ; for if all he brags of be true, such as knocking off the heads of ducks and geese with

his pistols, and snuffing candles, he must in sooth be as desperate a duellist as Best or Chamelford, whom he often talks of."

" Is this then, my fair friend, all you have to guard me against ?" said I, smiling at a scheme which appeared far too absurd, and much too horrible for even imagination to conceive. " Why, Miss Mulgrave, if your brother George were resolved to act the assassin, for such only could I call him, if he played the part you contemplate ; he might, methinks, hit upon ten better ways of doing the business, and find at least twenty causes of quarrel without involving you in the affair. I, however, shall ever remember with gratitude your disinterested kindness ; and only regret, if these circumstances prove true, it may involve the cruel necessity of my not cultivating your acquaintance so intimately as I should wish to have done."

" You must do so, however," was her answer, " for I positively have told you nothing but what is true ; and I will be thus far candid about my own concerns, as to confess, that, supposing you were so silly as to fall in love with me, it would never do you any good ; for my heart —— "

“ Is already engaged”—she would I suppose have added, had not her brother, Miss Lumley, and the Captain, that moment entered the drawing-room.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ You undergo too strict a paradox,
Striving to make an ugly deed look fair :
Your words have too much pains, as if they laboured
To bring manslaughter into form, set quarrelling
Upon the head of valour ; which indeed
Is valour misbegot, and came into the world
When sects and factions were but newly born.”

Timon.

So exceedingly *mal-à-propos* was this interruption, that, in the first instance, I attributed it to the deep machinations of Miss Mulgrave herself; but the confusion she displayed, which was much greater than my own, completely confuted so ill grounded and disgraceful a suspicion.

In the mean time, our embarrassment was

far from being dispelled by the rallying looks and smiles of the party, but more especially Miss Lumley's who, appearing surprised, exclaimed—

“Miss Mulgrave and Mr. Butler holding a morning *tête à tête* by all that's wonderful! Why, Mr. George, I thought we had the start of all the house for our walk by at least a lazy hour—Do you use to rise so early in Northumberland, cousin Butler?”

I stammered out, “Yes—in summer—and the morning was so beautiful and tempting, that I could not resist rising.”

“It certainly is a charming morning,” replied my persecutor, simpering and glancing significantly towards Mr. Mulgrave, who looking serious, bid me a very distant good morning.

“Though you appear to have made but little use of it—I mean in promenading—as we purpose doing,” observed Miss Lumley.

“Indeed, Miss Lumley, you do me and the beautiful scenery by which you are surrounded, extreme injustice; for I have been up more than an hour, and taken many a delightful

turn along your terrace admiring the very enchanting prospect it commands."

"What are you such an amateur pedestrian, Miss Mulgrave?" demanded the Captain sarcastically, looking however to me for an answer.

"I shall leave Miss Mulgrave to answer for herself," replied I with a fortunate nonchalance; which was not at all weakened, by the lady declaring that she certainly was up earlier than usual, from her watch having stopped. She also said that she could vouch for the truth of my having turned the morning to pretty good walking account, for she had seen me perambulating the terrace with my mouth open as if I had been rehearsing a maiden speech to be delivered in Parliament, or spouting poetry.

To this, the Lumleys and her brother bestowed about as much attention as its truth deserved; the latter person assuming a grave look as if to check her untimely levity, and nothing further quizzical passed till breakfast. Miss Lumley then thought fit to deliver herself of a few sarcastic insinuations concerning early rising, which drew a blush

from poor Miss Mulgrave ; caused her brother again to turn as grave as a parish clerk, about to give out a psalm—annoyed and disgusted me ; but afforded amazing merriment to the tall, gawkey, platter breasted Miss Ropers, whilst Foster's face showed plainly the agony of anxiety wherewith his soul was troubled.

After this abominable breakfast, there was a partial breaking up of the party—for the Ropers ordered their carriage, as to my regret did Miss Witherspoon, declaring in answer to the pressing solicitations of Captain Lumley, that she felt quite nervous about several of her pets which she had left under the charge of a servant, in whom she had no great dependence. I must say, that I was sorry to part with this antiquated, but kind hearted original, as she was to me the only conversable person there ; and I promised to visit her if possible, before setting out upon my wanderings.

We had limited our stay to four days ; and thanking heaven that this was the last of them but one, I repaired to my apartment to peruse and answer a few letters, when one of the

servants brought me a note and laid it before me without enquiring whether or not any answer was required. I immediately opened it and read with surprise, what I shall here transcribe.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I regret that I am almost an utter stranger to you, inasmuch, as it places me in a very difficult position, from my communication being one of extreme delicacy and importance. It could not possibly, Sir, escape my observation, nor, I have reason to believe that of others, that your attentions to Miss Mulgrave during our stay here, have been of such a marked nature, as to authorise me forming the conclusion, that (unknown to the other branches of the family) you have either been on a previous footing of intimacy with that lady, or contemplate honourable proposals with respect to her. Knowing the inexperience of my sister in the world, and being naturally watchful of the honour of our family, and not less so of her peace of mind, I have reluctantly taken the liberty of addressing you, for the purpose of requesting that you

will without delay, intimate to me your intentions with respect to Miss Mulgrave."

I felt exceedingly posed how to answer this extraordinary production ; which confirmed so exactly what Miss Mulgrave had advised me of ; and being unwilling to take any step without advice, I sent for Foster, whom I had left with the ladies, and unfolded to him the whole matter, excepting the warning I had gotten from the young lady, which I thought myself bound in honour to conceal.

" It is certainly a most singular letter," said Foster, who had perused it with extreme surprise, " nor do I see what grounds Mr. Mulgrave can have for demanding such an explanation. For even my eyes, which for certain jealous reasons were fixed pretty often upon you, perceived nothing which I could call loving, nor even any uncommon flirtation, nor yet any confusion. Once, perhaps, yes once, Miss Mulgrave looked agitated and abashed ; as if you had said something very delicate or indelicate ; and in truth you yourself, for once in your life, showed symptoms of perturbation."

"When was that?"

"Last night, during the very last quadrille. And indeed, not only Miss Lumley, but both the Miss Ropers remarked that you both appeared out of countenance; which I must say was not a little encreased, by the beautiful style in which you commenced the *balancez*, whilst every one else was busy at the *chassez croisez*."

I gave no explanation of this, as I easily might have done; for the time alluded to by Foster, was when the young lady had mustered courage to request an interview; in doing which, I well remembered that she naturally enough did betray considerable emotion.

"Well," replied I, "what is to be done? for although I can confess to you as a friend and confidant, that I have not, nor ever did entertain the most distant idea of becoming your rival, yet that has nothing to do with the answer necessary to be returned to this epistle."

"I differ from you there Butler," said Foster, his eyes sparkling with delight on hearing

this declaration, “ for in that case, it appears to me that this letter is very easily and satisfactorily answered, by your simply informing Mr. Mulgrave, that you never entertained any other ideas than those of civility and respect for his sister; with whom you were unacquainted till meeting her here ; and that you cannot persuade yourself, of having established by word or otherwise, any grounds for his forming a different opinion. Should this not prove satisfactory, Mulgrave must then be an unreasonable boor, and as such must we treat him ; although I prefer settling all such matters if possible, without coming to extremities. For I hold with honest Sosia,

“ Nam id arbitror
Adprime in vita esse utile, ut nequid nimis.

Besides, men of Mulgrave’s stamp are little better than desperadoes, having nothing but life to lose, which as regards them, is a commodity too worthless to put in the scales against any common christian’s.”

“ Manage the thing then entirely in your own way Foster, and in God’s name, let us

be wagging out of this ; for I assure you that I am sick both of the place and the people, and heartily wish myself back in ——— Street."

" With one bright exception, I could say the same," replied my friend, " and wish all in this house were for ever at our Antipodes — but come, here goes ;" taking up a pen, " I will do as you desire, and afterwards show you my production."

The note which Foster drew up, was like the address to a speech of our blessed King, almost the echo (to use a *journalism*) of what he had just said ; and I having perused, approved and written it out ; despatched it to Mr. Mulgrave, by my friend in person. Foster who came back immediately, wished to wait in order to see what answer might be returned ; but to this I objected, recommending him to rejoin the ladies, lest being altogether left to themselves they might suspect something was wrong, or at least call in question our good breeding.

Foster himself approved of this, after obtaining my promise that I would apprise him as soon as possible of the arrival of Mulgrave's

answer ; and with more solicitude in his mind than when he had entered the room, he repaired to enjoy the company of that beautiful creature whose name had thus been used to mask one of the most diabolical schemes that ever entered into the heart of man.

He was not long permitted thus to indulge himself, for Captain Lumley soon after waited upon me ; and after lamenting in a long hypocritical speech the deplorable misunderstanding which appeared likely to take place in his house, he presented me with his fellow conspirator's answer and retired. It ran as follows :—

“ Dear Sir,

“ I have the honour to acknowledge your note of eleven o'clock this morning which, however, I cannot regard as satisfactory. The advances made towards my sister, are not denied, nor the motive explained ; I must therefore, though unwillingly, insist on some more satisfactory explanation of conduct which I consider as disingenuous to myself and injurious to the reputation of my nearest and dearest relative.”

As I saw that the thing would end in Mulgrave's bullying me into a hostile meeting, unless I was before hand with him, I determined upon cutting the matter short: so sending for Foster, I showed him the letter, and commissioned him to wait on Mulgrave for the purpose of appointing a friend for bringing the matter to an immediate conclusion. This, Foster who was exceedingly tenacious of my honour, though apprehensive of my safety, immediately performed; and as I foresaw, Captain Lumley was the person chosen by my antagonist to conduct on his behalf the business.

Not to lose time, or produce any suspicion in the minds of Miss Mulgrave or the clergyman, the only two remaining visitors, we took a very friendly leave of all parties that same evening, pretending an engagement at the Opera. The Captain and Mulgrave had previously agreed to meet us in the morning at half past five, in a field not far from Richmond. Arrived at my Hotel, I felt very desirous of acquainting Foster of this atrocious conspiracy; one certainly sufficient in the event of my falling to have hanged both the wretches by whom it was

planned ; when to my surprise, he himself came out with some suspicions on the self same subject, and thus enabled me without breaking my promise to Miss Mulgrave, to canvass fully the subject.

The more we did so, the more did we execrate the horrible atrocity of our enemies ; and Foster swore a tremendous oath, that if any thing befell me he would never rest till he had brought one or both of the ruffians to account. This unpleasing observation prompted me to make my will, which I did in a slip of note paper, appointing Foster my sole executor ; a document which was duly signed by my valet and the master of the Hotel. Attended by a promising young surgeon, whom I had patronized since my first introduction to him, we rolled along before day break to the place of meeting ; and had the satisfaction of being first on the ground, though we perceived the carriage of our opponents approaching at a rapid pace just as we had clambered into the appointed field. The place though not far from some houses, was on the whole retired and suitable for the busi-

ness ; the preparatory arrangements were soon adjusted ; and the pistols being given us, it was decided by a toss that Foster should give the signal.

An affair such as this, was to me attended by no terror, and very little excitement ; for besides being steeled by those dogmas of fatalism which I had never yet relinquished, death had long since been deprived of his sting in my eyes. I moreover felt no compunction in attempting to destroy one whom I knew to be a depraved and heartless wretch ; and who had brought me there, not to vindicate his honour or revenge a wrong, but for the murderous purpose of shedding my blood. Nor should I perhaps, have failed in punishing severely his villainy, being then a very cool and respectable shot, had not that very command over myself, in such situations rendered me somewhat tardy in obeying Foster's word "Fire," by which means I received my adversary's ball in my leg, and fell immediately in the greatest agony. It was lucky for me that I had a surgeon in attendance, for the ball cut one of the arteries

of my limb, lodging betwixt the two bones ; and had he not applied his handkerchief as a tourniquet above my knee, I must soon have perished from the loss of blood.

CHAPTER IX.

“ What ? I love ! I sue ! I seek a wife,
A woman, that is like a German clock,
Still a repairing ; ever out of frame,
And never going aright ; being a watch,
But being watched, that it may still go right.”

No sooner was it known in town, that I was confined from the unlucky issue of this little affair, than I was waited on by innumerable kind visitors ; each one more anxious than another to hear the whole particulars attending it, in order to detail them again to his respective friends ; whilst the papers found as usual a capital subject for interesting gossip and scandal.

With the exception however of Foster and a few more intimate friends, I saw nobody ; not even Captain Lumley, whose enquiries were very regular, most particular, and of course very gratifying to my feelings. By thus keeping myself quiet, and through the skilful attention of my young medical attendant, I was soon out of all danger of losing my limb, as had been at one time apprehended ; and able to take the air in my chariot. As soon as I was fully restored to strength, I resolved upon setting out on my long projected continental trip, and taking Foster with me ; though to this my friend for some time refused to agree, alleging the impossibility of his doing justice to my affairs. I was however determined not to set out without him ; and he was accordingly forced to make the best arrangements he could for managing matters during our absence, in which he was most materially assisted by old Jasper Harrison in whose honesty we both placed perfect reliance.

This, and all other necessary preparations being made, we quitted our Hotel for Dover, in a strong, yet light travelling carriage which

I got built for the occasion ; attended by a single valet who spoke both French and Italian and of whom I had a very good opinion.

We had not got so far as Shooter's Hill, before I was struck with the unusual gravity of my companion ; but as I attributed this to his being separated from Miss Mulgrave, I forbore noticing it till the afternoon, when he had become so silent and stupid as to be exceedingly disagreeable to me, who felt rather in a conversational humour.

“ If I must tell you the truth,” said Foster, “ the reason of my dullness is because I suspect you do not think me altogether worthy of your confidence.”

“ How can that be ?” demanded I with surprise ; “ how is it possible that you can harbour so unjust a suspicion, when you are entrusted, and intimately acquainted with my concerns, my sentiments, and I may add my intentions ?”

“ Butler,” said he, “ the only claim which I can ever have, or the only return which I can possibly ever make for a continuation of your generosity, is my honesty ; nor shall I on the present occasion forfeit your good opinion by

fearing to acquaint you of the grounds of a suspicion which I must say renders me very miserable. I yesterday, met Miss Mulgrave for the last time at Lady Townley's ; and to my extreme surprise and horror, heard from her own lips every particular respecting the accursed and cowardly conspiracy to which you so nearly fell a victim. Now, not a syllable of this did you think proper to entrust to me; although we talked over our suspicions on that very subject for upwards of an hour."

" If this," replied I, " be the only instance which you can adduce of a want of confidence on my part, as I trust it is; I shall find little difficulty in dispelling your ill-grounded notion. You must know then my dear friend, that I was explicitly charged by Miss Mulgrave, not to mention a syllable to any one of the secret she confided to me ; but besides such a command on her part, I imagined from the jealousy of your disposition, that you would not have been much gratified at hearing of my enjoying private interviews with your intended. However," continued I looking narrowly at him, " I must say that I have every right to be quits with you, and have

a most excellent reason for retorting upon your own head this unjust accusation of a want of confidence."

"How?" cried he, turning red from confusion.

"You will have little difficulty in discovering," replied I, "when I tell you, that the charge is connected with the same lovely object we have just been talking of."

"If," replied Foster, after some hesitation, "the identity of Miss Mulgrave and the young lady whose visit caused such confusion be what you allude to—"

"It is—and now," said I, mimicking his tone and manner, "not a syllable of this did you think proper to entrust to me, although we have talked over Miss Mulgrave's charms and accomplishments for an hour at a time; and many a well-merited lecture have I read you for falling into love with fair poetesses with black footmen, and then relinquishing all thoughts of them as completely as if they had been ancient Pythonesses."

"Well," said Foster, smiling, "and if I received peremptory orders from Miss Mulgrave (as I did) to say nothing of her being the same

individual, you must confess I have as good an excuse as you have; and our forgiveness of each other's want of confidence must be mutual."

"I desire no more," replied I, stretching out my hand to Foster, whose natural good spirits now returned as quickly as an April sunshine courses across some verdant meadow. "You often twit me," said he, "about my jealousy, though I am not aware of entertaining any except for your safety; and had I known the true circumstances attending this deliberate and almost incredible plan of murder, you should never have had my consent to meet such a villain as Mulgrave. Nay, were it not for his sister's sake and your promise, I should very much recommend clapping both him and Lumley into Newgate to stand a trial for their dastardly lives."

"Certainly," answered I, "more honourable men have died dancing in the circumambient air; but as the affair is finished, and my limb nearly recovered, let us say not a word more about it."

"Believe me," replied Foster, "the subject is as disagreeable to me as you, and I will wil-

lingly drop it ; although it leads me to observe that I would sooner live the life of a thief, highwayman or pirate, than your's, with all your wealth and flattery."

" That is likely enough Foster, for I am a miserable heart-blighted being ; but what is the reason of your making such an observation at this moment.

" Your being a bachelor," responded he ; " and now as little tiffs in the conjugal state when ended, are usually cemented by some favour being asked and granted, I see no reason why this should not hold good in friendship. I shall therefore, my friend, make no apology in requesting you seriously and solemnly to think of matrimony."

" You cannot, I am sure, be serious ;" replied I, " knowing, as you do, that I never again can entertain any warm affection for womankind."

" And pray what has that to do with marrying one ? Methinks Hymen might give up his godship as Diocletian did the purple, and go a wagging from the spheres, if he expected the heart to follow the hand. No—no, I assure

you, woman is now-a-days, little better than a fair piece of parchment containing either a bond or a mortgage, and money or convenience are the only real inducements for marrying. You, however, have more powerful reasons ; not only the maintaining possession of a princely fortune, and the revenging a grievous injury, but the preserving your very existence.”

“ I heartily wish,” said I, “ that Miss Mulgrave had been here to have heard your sentiments regarding marriage; and to have saved me the trouble of taking you to task on the subject; for there is nothing you or any one else can say which will ever convince me that woman is otherwise than generous and disinterested. I grant that we see many in the world who are not so, but through life every man may or will find one woman whose virtues far surpass his own ; and if this be true, and there exist no very great numeral disparity betwixt the sexes, we ought, I think, to praise instead of traducing her. It is more owing to artificial circumstances than a want of reciprocal feeling that there are so many miserable matches in the world, for a person must divest

himself of the at best, but puerile passions of rank, title, and even wealth, before he can ensure himself happiness : though, certainly, he is the luckiest man on earth who wins that worthy heart which they adorn.”

But if these adventitious blessings be once thrown into the scale as auxiliaries to love, trust me the heaven-born passion has not been there. Some bantling of Plutus has aped the cherub god ; there has been some delusion, which will clear away with years, leaving the heart untenanted, yearning after a consolation it can nowhere find ; and even doubtful whether that often mentioned idol, *true love*, really does exist amongst us mortals.”

“ I bow to you as a *master of arts* in love,” answered Foster, “ but as to marriage, I must still keep my opinion ; for how seldom do we see people marry those they love. I do believe, with Socrates, ‘ that if a man marries he will repent it ; and if he does not that he will repent it,’ which is nothing more than to say we are a set of dissatisfied devils.

But the thing to be decided, is, which we are likely to repent most, marriage or celibacy.

Now, in your case, the question is, I believe, one easy of decision ; for, in the first place here are nearly four years elapsed since your worthy uncle died, and you have not saved a much larger sum than sixteen thousand pounds. Now supposing, you were to lay by even as much as five thousand a year for the next six years, (which is the length of your tether), the whole sum would not amount to fifty thousand pounds; on the interest of which, and the thousand a year secured to you, you may assuredly live with comfort, but not in your present princely style. Should you, however, survive those six years without fulfilling the conditions of your uncle's will, which I think problematical, considering the specimen we have had of the Lumleys' machinations, you will, at the end of that period, feel much greater reluctance in relinquishing your estates than at present.”

“ It is a delightful and edifying thing, friend Foster, to hear you quoting Socrates in defence of marriage ; considering, that he himself was cursed by the most thorough shrew and vixen that ever breathed. I however, rather side with Diogenes (if I must put wisdom

against wisdom,) who was wont to tell young men it was too soon to marry, and old gentlemen that it was too late. What the deuce ! are not six years space enough for me to find some birth to fit me in the matrimonial gallies, if it behoves me to wear the gyves ? Besides, as I never again can love as I have loved ; were it not better and more charitable for me to look out for some old titled trot, who may prove the scape goat to my uncle's presumption, rather than sacrifice the happiness of some heart sound damsel?"

" Were my answer to decide the question," replied Foster, " it should be far otherwise ; for I adhere much more to the dictates of youth and beauty, than the dogmas of that most doggish tub-tabernacled barbarian, whose opinions I value not a farthing. As I am myself however, in a cynical humour, I cannot help fetching your bachelorship a wife, by saying that unless you marry, or do your best to marry, I shall pronounce you horribly selfish."

" Prove that to my satisfaction," cried I, " and then dispose of me how and to whom you please."

" You shall judge for yourself; and to go to work in true Socratic style, let me first ask whether or not you consider yourself under any obligations to your late beneficent relative?"

" Unquestionably I do; and I revere his memory."

" And justly," continued Foster, " for had you said otherwise, the very wheels of this luxurious vehicle would have rattled in chorus into yours ears that odious word—ingratitude. But do you not, moreover believe, that it was your uncle's wish that the possessor of his property should form an alliance with some noble family?"

" Really," replied I, " I am at a loss how to account for my uncle's making so strange a condition to his will; but I am convinced it could not have been for the sake of ennobling his property, (so to speak), otherwise he might as easily have imposed it upon Captain Lumley as myself."

" Pardon me; I differ from you there entirely. The only legitimate conclusions which we can draw from the manner in which Mr. Butler thought fit to dispose of his property,

are these : first, that being convinced by Jasper Harrison of the unjustness of his opinion respecting you, he left you the bulk of his fortune, as much from the suggestions of restored affection, as an atonement for his former illiberality ; and secondly, with respect to this condition, I can only regard it as an expression of his wish, that the heir of his wealth should aspire to the highest circles of society. I cannot look upon it, as intended for any punishment or infliction ; and although, its not being imposed equally upon Captain Lumley may at first give it an appearance of that sort, I think that a very satisfactory reason may be found for such an omission, by the improbability of your refusing or neglecting to comply with an injunction which is neither difficult or disagreeable.”

“ Granting all this, how do you intend establishing your charge of my being horribly selfish ?”

“ By the application of it to your own conscience ; for if you sincerely believe, as I think you must do, that your uncle desired you to marry in accordance to his will, you do equal

injustice to his benevolence and yourself, in not fulfilling its conditions. Besides this, as you are continually exposed to the flagitious schemes of these Lumleys, and may be poisoned or have your throat cut any four and twenty hours, self preservation and peace of mind alike demand the unwilling sacrifice. So you perceive, my dear Butler, that you are fairly in the hours of a dilemma ; either of which ought and must gore you into the relinquishment of a blind and ignominious celibacy. I may say with old Simo

“ Spero consuetudine et
Conjugio liberali devinctum, Chreme,
Dehinc facile ex illis sese emersurum malis.”

“So argumentative a panegyric,” replied I, “on the ‘ all-important step,’ convinces me of your own intentions. You however, forget the extraordinary *antipathy* with which I am unfortunately cursed. Do you think it likely I could ever obtain a supportable partner, when I make known to her my weakness ? Or supposing I was to keep the secret locked up in my own

breast, reflect upon the dreadful consequences which might ensue. I should certainly have his Majesty as *parens patriæ*, or rather his representative the Chancellor issuing his warrant to enquire into the sanity of my mind."

" Such a thing should never give me one uneasy thought," answered Foster, " no woman in the universe would think a whit the worse of a husband because he loathed a cat; but do you think you are the only person in the world afflicted with prejudices? I could give you many instances to the contrary. Henry the Third of France hated cats just as heartily as you do; and so did Marshal Schomberg, who is reputed to have found out a way of writing on the moon. Erasmus abhorred the smell of fish; Cardan, eggs; Scaliger, milk; a King of Poland, apples; and indeed there is scarce a production in nature which has not been repulsive to some celebrated character."

" I can imagine a man hating anything," said I, " but that there should be instances of persons loving cats, appears to me from my feelings utterly incredible; and yet I well remember

Herodotus in his Euterpe, affirms the Egyptians to have entertained so superstitious a reverence for these wretches, that the charge of them was held an honourable office and made hereditary—whilst to kill one was a capital offence. Nor suppose that I wish to make any display of my learning, when I tell you of another matter mentioned by an ancient historian; because whatever I read concerning the horrid tribe becomes indelibly fixed in my memory. Diodorus Siculus then informs us, that a Roman soldier having accidentally killed a demon of this species, (in Alexandria) I think, he was immediately beset by an enraged multitude, and not all the dignity of the Roman citizenship, nor the certainty of his death being revenged could save his life."

" It is almost incredible," observed Foster, " more especially as their folly rested not in worshipping them whilst alive, for I recollect that the former author mentioned by you, says, that these sacred mousers were salted and buried in the city of Bubastis."

" Degrading as such idolatry is to human nature," said I, " there is something much

more disgusting in my eyes in the conduct of Madame du Puis the celebrated harpist who settled a pension on her cat, and which the judges very properly set aside after it had given employment to the wisest and most ingenious counsellors of the day. Good God how my blood did boil with shame and indignation when first I read so shameful a fact! To appropriate a sum for the purpose of smoothing the declining days of a useful and grateful animal, such as the dog who has long faithfully followed and defended us; or the horse which has borne us patiently through the pleasures of the chace or the dangers of the battle, is a just and generous bequest; but to apply to the luxury of an unfeeling, pampered, thankless, domestic tiger, that which would afford bread to many a houseless, penniless believer in the Deity is a heinous, abominable crime."

"I perfectly agree with what you have now said," replied Foster, "and hope you have profited so much by this conference as to confess the prudence of taking to yourself

a spouse, should an opportunity of finding a suitable one present itself."

"O most lame and impotent conclusion!" cried I, "you are desirous of a triumph, but I intend making no admission which may flatter your vanity. Here however we are in 'Dear Dover,' so let us stop for the present our connubial conversation."

CHAPTER X.

“ Immortal glories in my mind revive,
And in my soul a thousand passions strive,
When Rome’s exalted beauties I descry,
Magnificent in piles of ruin lie,—
An Amphitheatre’s amazing height
Here fills my eye with horror and delight,
That on its public shows unpeopled Rome,
And held uncrowded, nations in its womb.”

Addison.

THERE is nothing more absurd than the way many people travel. By travelling I mean that migrating from land to land, and place to place, to which our swallow resembling countrymen are so addicted from *ennui* or curiosity. The rich shut themselves up in

a close and comfortable carriage, with perchance, a dozen volumes of routes, travels, and maps, which are seldom consulted ; whilst the traveller, dreaming of riches or ambitious projects, dreams himself at length fairly to sleep ; and is only now and then awakened for the purpose of having his passport demanded, or baggage examined. To see a country, so as to form a proper estimate of the manners and opinions of a people, we ought surely to travel as much as possible with them, and associate in their meals and amusements ; and yet how different is the behaviour of our purse-proud gentry ! I have often been highly amused at seeing an English family arrive at a Hotel in France or Italy—up drive the close comfortable carriages—out get the *voyageurs*, with their legs so cramped that you might suppose them spavined ; when they are immediately shewn into private apartments, and no matter whether these look into a yard, pond, or something worse, provided that they are strictly private.

Here they maintain a pertinacious seclusion, and after finishing a meal most probably

cooked up from the leavings of a merry party in the *salle à manger* below, the horses are ordered, and grumbling and dissatisfied they are again encased for another hour or two's wheeling. I would, therefore, recommend every man who has no encumbrance of wife or daughters, to lay aside the dignity of equipage and servants, and jog on in the national way wherever he may be ; and he may rely upon his being the gainer of much fun and information at the expense of very little time and scarcely any inconvenience ; for more substantial respect is shewn all the world over to the *juste milieu* of travellers, than even to the heaviest pursed peer.

This trite but true observation I have been led to make, from having myself on this occasion been foolish and slothful enough to travel in somewhat such a reserved manner as I have described ; and I have many a time since repented doing so. It may be said by some, that the manners only of the higher classes are worthy of observance—but to such persons I shall make no reply, believing their opinions to be about as valuable on the subject

as their taste will probably be found to be enlightened. I guess, as Jonathan says, that the reading of such persons will lie chiefly in those precious productions which are called (why or wherefore God knows,) fashionable novels—than which no more abominable trash was ever spawned on this benighted world. Trash, in which one idea, natural or sensible is never to be found ; nor what is worse, one being bearing a christian name ; from these, endless Dukes, Marquisses, Lords and Ladies, the Lord preserve us in time to come ! it is indeed enough to make us believe old democratic England has become the limbo of vanity, when we see titled personages as common, and far less sensible or humourous than the veriest street porters. I am, however, wandering more ways than one ; but if the above advice prove beneficial to individuals, and indirectly so to the community at large by keeping some of our good guineas at home, my digression will I hope be pardoned.

Were not this work from its nature purely personal and egotistical ; I might now give it a travelling complexion, and spin out page

after page about places which all christendom knows as well as their own parish churches ; and which pages would most certainly be skipped over by the reader. Nor to tell the truth, would I think much of his judgment if he acted otherwise ; for after the many instructive and entertaining works which have appeared on France, Italy, and Germany, from the pens of ladies as well as gentlemen, how can I expect to succeed in describing succinctly what they have so fully and admirably accomplished ? It is sufficient then that the reader merely follow our track so as not to lose sight of us, which was from Paris to Geneva with its interesting shores—thence to Milan with her cathedral and gorgeous shrine—thence over the Bocchetta to lovely Genoa, where after seeing every thing rich and fair in her princely palaces, we set off for Pisa and Leghorn.

I shall not, I repeat, tarry to describe any of these well known places ; no, not even that gem of serenest beauty, the Leman Lake ; on whose shores, if Fate forbids me to live, I fondly hope she will yet grant me to die.

I have heard many say, what matters it where

we die, or how we are disposed of when dead ? But such persons are surely ignorant of the purpose for which they were sent into this world. Primary existence being an unconscious gift, we, as far as regards our entrance into this wondrous universe, are little better than the earthly atoms which compose the whole ; but as soon as reason plumes her pennons, we perceive that we were created but to perish. How then can death, or the death bed site, prove a subject of indifference to any rational mind ? Oh, no ! many instances have I known of individuals who, before closing their eyes for ever, have asked to have their emaciated heads raised, in order that they might take a last, lingering look on their last sun. And they have gazed upon it with the solemn adoration of a worshipper of Mithra or Ormuz.

As for myself, it is my wish that the world may close upon my glazing eye, not amidst the buzz and ferment of human folly,—not with the useless and often heartless observances of society,—nor, above all, where the features of fair Nature have been disfigured by man—No ; may my last look embrace at once, of moun-

tain, rock, and flood, and avalanche—such as can only be comprised in thee, thou loveliest of all Lakes !

Those whom idleness, curiosity, or infirmity, carry into the regions of the sunny South are seldom satisfied till they find their way to Rome ; and it is well, for assuredly there is no other city which can so well repay the pilgrimage. He must indeed have little interest in the history of humanity, who on entering her old walls feels not a thousand regrets, hopes, and wonderings at the mutability of fortune, and the achievements of power. He sees himself on the immortal site of her who has ruled the earth both by the sword and the soul ; and whilst passing over the dust of millions of his race, with the ruins of the mightiest of empires crumbling around him, deadened indeed must be his spirit if it represent not to his mind his own unimportance, and bring to it this conviction—that vain and unstable must be the duration of every ambitious scheme, which rests not on the imperishable adamant of justice and reason. To me it appears much more probable, that there is a golden age in store for

us, than that such has ever brightened this gloomy world ; but before its sun may shine there are many mystic mists and errors to be dispelled, which render us in reality, but little superior to the brute creation, and not the least dense and degrading of these, is superstition.

Of such a nature were the reflections which suggested themselves to Foster and myself, as we entered the immortal city by moonlight ; when the abrupt turn of a narrow street brought us fairly in front of Saint Peter's, with its gigantic colonnade, fountains, and obelisk, a spectacle sufficiently imposing without the foil of any association. It was in truth so sublime a sight, that we ordered the postilions to stop for a few minutes in order that we might fully enjoy it ; which we did in expressive silence. The majestic dome stood in great part clearly defined in the soft moon-beams, as also a portion of the vast Vatican, whilst its noble front seemed curtained with a gloomy frown. The eye then glided along those noble colonnades of Bernini, through which the moonlight shot, forming regular strata of silver and ebony, till

it condescended to notice the comparatively speaking, insignificant obelisk and fountains.

I am not however going to dwell on a theme so often, and much better described than I am capable of doing ; nor should I have mentioned St. Peter's more than St. Paul's, but for the overpowering, and never to be forgotten effect of its appearance under these circumstances. We turned away, our minds filled with a grand and new feeling, which neither of us could analize or express ; and after having our luggage examined in the Dogana, itself one of the most perfect and interesting antiquities in Rome, (though its former uses are unknown,) we arrived in a well frequented and very comfortable Hotel in the Piazza d'Espagne.

Much to Foster's disappointment, we arrived at Rome after Easter, and so missed some of the most imposing ceremonies of the Roman church ; but as it was our intention to spend several months in Naples, we consoled ourselves by determining, if possible, to view them on our return. The only advantage we obtained by arriving at so unfashionable a season,

was the finding abundance of accommodation, and seeing Rome as an Italian city, instead of swarming with those eternal My Lords and fashionable *forestieri*, who remind one always of the folly and ostentation of our own capital.

In the way of antiquity, we saw all that others have seen ; for an account of which I must refer the curious who have not been there, to the pages of five thousand different authors, male and female, whose names I shall append to the end of my last volume should I write another, and fall short of matter. There was, however, one sight we had not yet seen, worth all the rest, and that was the Colosseum by moonlight. The reason of this was, the lateness of Dame Dictyanna's appearance ; but at length we one night managed to await her coming, over a cool flask or two of capital *Orvieto*, and being a small party, took the precaution of being well armed ; for several travellers had lately been robbed in making the same visit, in spite of the guards placed there for their protection.

There is no edifice, no handiwork of man which can vie in interest with this awful mammoth of masonry. The towering pyramids are

but a mystery and a stumbling-block ; for to them are attached little instruction, and no story : they have scarcely any moral interest ; they resemble a huge carcass which has held so common a soul as to be forgotten and unknown ; whereas, the Colosseum is the last great stamp imprinted by the last great empire for the instruction and astonishment of mankind.

How impotent and prone to oblivion is matter, unless conjoined to intellect ! The perishable Papyrus, that tells thy terrible history. O solemn pile, has done for posterity what neither brass nor marble could achieve ; and ages, yet unborn, shall wonder at thy tale when the mite, which yet remains, of coeval Rome, and all her gorgeous modern shrines are prostrate in the dreary desert, and a pilgrimage for the adventurous, like Zenobia's capital. He must, indeed, be a common animal in feeling, or gifted with an apathy which no ignorance can excuse, who can enter into this awful relic of antiquity, without being overcome with awe and admiration. What a fitting confessional for ambitious kings, in which their hearts may be disemburdened, and convinced of the perishableness and vanity of every thing connected with ex-

istence, save wisdom, and virtue. Here, if they humble not their proud thoughts to an equality with their fellow-beings, they may at least feel a passing prostration of pride before that sole monarch who never shall be deposed; and in whose democratical eyes, all are what they really are, but worms.

It was a delightful night (if we may so call half-past one P. M.), and the mellow moon seemed to have mustered an unusual brightness to burnish up the richest banquet that the eye of enthusiasm ever gloated on. The open arena, with its smooth turf, simple wooden cross, and the surrounding little religious stations, were lapped in vivid moonshine ; as were innumerable portions of the crumbling arches which rising tier above tier in irregular layers of gloom and brightness, formed one stupendous mass of glorious mosaic, such as no other object on earth could possibly display. There was not a whisper, nor yet a breath to agitate

“ The garland-forest which the gray walls wear,
Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar’s head,”

and when we ventured to speak, our voices

sounded low and thin, as if each feared to break that fitting silence which had beset us like a powerful spell. So completely was I wrapped up in my own thoughts, that I fairly started when Foster, in a voice which seemed a profanation of the place, enquired what were my feelings?

“ They are unutterable,” replied I, “ perhaps my first sensations were those of rapture at the grandeur of the spectacle; and the next, astonishment at the magnitude of this tremendous fabric. I can scarce believe it to have been accumulated by human hands, and am ready to exclaim, that truly there were giants in those days!”

“ Yes, in tyranny and crime;” replied Foster, “ I have experienced nearly the same sensations as yourself; but I confess to you, that my blood now almost curdles within me when I remember the many thousands of miserable wretches who have here poured forth their’s to amuse the merciless million of monsters assembled to enjoy the sacrifice.”

As he said this, he turned away in a meditative manner; when I, for the first time, perceived that we were not the only visitors to this

sublime spectacle; for, at the further end of the oval, was a party consisting of a lady, three gentlemen, and two servants. These did not escape my friend's observation, and whilst he sauntered leisurely towards the group, in order to see if he could recognize their faces, I sat myself down on a fragment of white marble to luxuriate on a scene, of which I had heard so much, but which so far surpassed every thing that imagination had depicted. To muse, if not to meditate, has been, with me, a habit through life; and it is not unlikely that I should fall under the dominion of fancy in such favourable circumstances. I, accordingly, had not long occupied my seat, on which some senator might once have rested himself; before my imagination had materially metamorphosed all around me; and at length conjured up the amphitheatre in all its pristine life, grandeur, and admiration. I saw it, crowded with human beings; the senators distinguished by their robes, with the broad purple stripe, occupying the lowest and most advantageous seats; and immediately above them sat a more numerous crowd of knights and less distinguished citizens, whilst from these there rose a

host of heads high into the air. Amidst these, there was a glancing of gold and silver vessels, filled up to the greatest advantage for show; garlands of flowers and nosegays; and occasional jets of coloured perfumes, forming beautiful and aromatic irises.

My eye then wandered to the spacious arena; when, amidst the deafening shout of the mighty multitude, which made me tremble, a troop of gladiators entered, paired, fenced, and afterwards fought, till all had disappeared, to give way for a prodigious number of lions, tigers, hyænas, and ostriches.

Again, the acclamations of the overjoyed people rung in my ears like the tremendous roar of the roused ocean; and again a scene of carnage ensued. Methought the monster Commodus, dressed as a *secutor*, sprung into a strongly defended portion of the arena; and with unerring aim, dealt forth arrow after arrow and dart after darts on the devoted and defenceless brutes, till all lay sweltering in their gore.

Again, the deafening plaudits of the people and the senators, of the emperor of the world, rose, and re-echoed through the building; and again, as if by magic, all was changed. What had lately

been a blood-imbrued plain of sand, became suddenly a spacious lake, covered with glittering gallies, and crowded with panoplied warriors, who furiously strove to grapple and board each other's vessels.

The contest was terrible ; and the shouts of the combatants, the rattling of armour, the clashing of helms and shields, the splashing of oars and heroes in the element, and the acclamations and encouragements of the spectators were all as vividly before me as if I had been transported to the times and presence of the ruthless Emperors. I was however brought back to what was really before me, by the low sound of footsteps behind. I turned round, but could see no one ; and was indeed quite alone for I perceived that Foster had got into conversation with the travellers at the opposite side of the enclosure. As however, I had plainly distinguished the sound of foot-steps, I believed they must have been my servant's ; and I accordingly, pronounced his name James, but without getting any answer. I was seated, not many paces from that vomitary by which strangers usually enter the ruins, and which nearly fronts

Constantine's Arch ; and finding myself mistaken, with respect to James' presence, I felt satisfied that it was the military tread of one of the guards which had disturbed my reverie.

I now rose from my seat, and was about to emerge upon the grassy arena and rejoin Foster ; when a tall figure, enveloped in a spacious cloak, and his face concealed by a broad brimmed hat, sprung suddenly upon me, and in an instant a stiletto was plunged over my shoulder into my breast.

Whether it was that the folds of his cloak diverted in some measure the blow, or restrained his arm ; or that the assassin was unpractised in his calling, I will not take upon me to determine : but fortunately for me, the blade only ploughed my side, bestowing upon it a long ugly gash without however penetrating any mortal part ; and therefore, though felled by the impetuosity of his assault, I was far from dangerously injured.

Equally fortunate was it for me, that I did fall ; since in order to repeat his stab, it was necessary for the miscreant whose fury had carried him several yards from me, to return to his

work of blood through some stones and rubbish, the footing amongst which was so precarious as to require considerable precaution. These circumstances trifling in themselves, were of such vital importance as to save my life ; for making the most of these few precious moments I drew a pistol from my pocket, and as the wretches arm was again raised to strike, I sent a ball completely through his body.

The terror and astonishment which was occasioned by the discharge of my weapon, prevented any one coming to my assistance for a few minutes ; when Foster missing me, flew to the spot, and found me leaning against the wall with the blood flowing freely down my white vest and pantaloons. No sooner saw he this, than he turned deadly pale, and uttered an exclamation of horror ; supposing not only that I was a dead man, but that I had put an end to myself with my own hands.

I was too weak to make any further explanation, than by pointing to the still writhing body ; and in the mean time, we were surrounded by several soldiers, and a couple of the strange gentlemen, who on recovering their surprise had followed Foster's example.

I was now able to assure my friend, that I was more agitated than injured; but he without returning any answer, expeditiously stripped off my coat and waistcoat; and with his neck-cloth, and the sleeve of my shirt managed to bandage the wound in a manner, which would have done credit to any medical man, considering all the circumstances.

Whilst thus engaged, one of the soldiers had dragged unceremoniously the body which was now lifeless, from the rubbish in which it lay, into the moonshine, in order to identify its features; and another had procured for me a flask of wine—a draught of which was the most refreshing I ever remember having enjoyed.

All now were anxious to get me into a carriage, but I could not resist the curiosity of looking at the wretch whom none of the soldiers could identify.

To my astonishment, the features were quite familiar to me, though I could not remember where I had seen them.

“I have seen that man somewhere Foster,” said I.

" 'Tis fortunate," observed one of the travellers, whose voice too sounded in my ears like an old acquaintance, though I was too much engrossed in scanning the dead man's face to examine the speaker—" 'tis fortunate, as some clue may thereby be found to trace the other authors of this shocking attempt at murder."

" I too have seen him and remember the villain well!" cried Foster, who had stood pondering over the body. " He is that identical French scoundrel Sears, who was caught robbing us all at Guilford and so justly punished for his knavery."

It assuredly was the identical Monsieur Sears ; although his coming into a second collision with me, and with so horrible an intention remained and was likely to remain a mystery.

The smarting of my wound however, now drew my attention another way ; and thanking those strangers who had kindly assisted me to my carriage, I was driven back to the Hotel in a very weak and miserable state.

CHAPTER XI.

" You had more beard when I last saw you! but your favour is well appeased by your tongue. What's the news in Rome?

Coriolanus.

I WAS next morning waited upon by one of the police, to whom by means of an interpreter (for neither Foster nor myself were learned in Italian) I gave a minute account of all that had taken place in the Colosseum, as also all I previously knew of Sears' character. This he wrote down, promising to investigate the matter; which I was anxious he should do most fully, and promised to reward handsomely his zeal should it prove successful; for I could

attribute no cause for Sears' attempting my life unless it were at the instigation of some unknown enemy.

To my disappointment however, the exertions of the police were quite unavailing; nothing more could be learnt of Sears than that he had for some time been acting in the capacity of courier; was last seen in the service of a Mr. Smith, who it appeared had lately left France for England by the Rhine; and had ostensibly come to Rome, for the purpose of getting further employment.

This was all we could discover concerning this villain. And although both of us suspected, that he had been bribed by Lumley or some of his emissaries to murder me, yet were there so many improbabilities connected with this suspicion, that we doubted whether the wretches malevolence might not have prompted him to commit an atrocious act of revenge, on his recognising us to be two of that party which had bestowed upon him such well merited punishment; and that Foster might have been the victim as well as myself, had he afforded him an equally favourable opportunity.

Every sweet has its bitter—but fortunately it is sometimes the reverse ; and one good attending this most disagreeable and dangerous adventure, was my re-establishing an old friendship in the person of that traveller whose voice I thought I had heard before ; and who calling to enquire after me next day, left his card, “ Colonel Landon.”

Alas ! what a series of morbid reflections did that name recall—Poor Alfred Wyndham, with his death wound on his noble breast, again rose before me, not to upbraid but to compassionate ! and then the betrothed, and bereaved Agnes; but she, as I remembered Miss Witherspoon’s telling me had married; and must have almost forgotten or forgiven me, since she had been able so soon to find a substitute for her first love. However, an almost inexhaustible mine of meditation was opened; and I marvelled at the several singular coincidences, and many thoughts which had been unburied by this eventful visit to the Colosseum.

Next day the Colonel again called, and agreeable to my orders was admitted ; our meeting, was, I must say rather embarrassing than

agreeable; for whilst I felt a diffidence approaching almost to shame—he was over-powered with amazement, on recognizing me to be the destroyer of his intended son-in-law.

To explain the reason of his being so concerned about my recovery, (which the reader might very excusably impute to his having recognized me on the previous occasion), it will necessary to give a slight sketch of Colonel Landon's character, and which I should have attempted before now, had I ever dreamt of again meeting him.

The fact then is, that the honest Colonel, who was far from being blessed with any bright abilities, had an inveterate fondness for courting, what is called by others besides himself, *good society*. Having nothing either by birth or connexion to recommend him to the notice or patronage of the great, he whilst in India made up for the want of these leading strings to fortune by unremitting respect and adulation to his superiors: and by these means having wriggled himself into a lucrative staff appointment, he by prudent economy and all the other

usual means of gaining Asiatic wealth did manage to realize in a few years a very handsome independency. On returning to Europe where money he believed was the sole graduating scale of society, he assumed some high Bashaw airs, and to his surprise and mortification soon discovered that wealth however powerful and universally honoured was not an infallible passport into what he termed, *good society*. Now as he had always aimed at this, more especially from having an accomplished, marriageable daughter he was forced again to have recourse to those very expedients by which he had smoothed the way to official place and affluence

Accordingly, though naturally of a proud and imperious temper, Landon carefully flattered those above him; and by scratching the backs of aristocratic fools, often managed to get upon their shoulders and thus did he approach, and even obtain partial admission into a "circle, which to one less dexterously ambitious is almost exclusive.

His next step was to become an M. P. and he was actually in treaty for a Burgh when fortune befriended him in another way, cutting

out at the same time quite a sufficiency of work for his pagodas and rupees. This, in his estimation, was the triumphant fact, that Sir Charles d'Eville, the most notorious profligate and dictator of the *ton* of his day, had fallen in love with his fair daughter. The Colonel's raptures when this *roué* proposed, at the dawning prospects such an union afforded him of commanding *good society*, were so ill concealed, that the embarrassed young Baronet was somewhat inexorable in the pecuniary preliminaries which were drawn up on the occasion. It may be supposed, that the unhappy Agnes was never seriously consulted in this affair; and Colonel Landon had the extreme satisfaction of seeing his Ladyship of a daughter, wasting her bloom of beauty, and innocent *naïveté* of feeling, in the crowded salons of the fashionable world after paying down three lacs and a half of rupees, which in legal money of this realm, may be estimated at about thirty five thousand pounds sterling.

Heaven however, seemed indignant at the human or almost angelic sacrifice, by which Landon had earned his entry into the very

penetralia of fashion's fane ; and few months elapsed after Agnes' ill omened match, before Sir Charles, (whose libertine habits had never been laid aside,) began to feel vitally those encroachments which he had long been making on an indifferent constitution. Consumption had sealed irrevocably his doom ; and after a short residence at Pisa and Lucca, his remains were transported to Leghorn, and deposited in the beautiful English cemetery at that place.

On Sir Charles' death, the Colonel and his daughter had repaired to Rome, where he had prolonged his stay several months ; it being a place where there is a great influx of strangers, and one where society is on a rational footing, all pride and consequence being justly exploded. This just suited the Colonel, who never missed any opportunity of making an acquaintance, by whose means he might ferret out some other persons which he aimed at. No sooner therefore heard he that I was the Mr. Butler, whom fame had with her multiplying table of a tongue, suddenly possessed of sixty thousand a year, and the representation

of Northumberland, by the interest of the Duke of Northumberland and the Marquis of — than he determined to get introduced to me some way or other.

He had never yet seen us, though occupying apartments in the same hotel; but understanding that we intended visiting the Colosseum that evening on which we did so, he immediately fixed with some friends on making the same excursion. Considering the unreasonableness of the hour, this somewhat surprised them, but he of course never explained his real reason for so suddenly determining upon the visit.

So admirable a tactician was not likely to bungle a deliberate plan; and he and his party were there some time before our arrival. During that dangerous musing fit, when Foster had approached them as I have formerly recounted, the Colonel took the opportunity of introducing himself, and had just enquired whether he had the honour of addressing Mr. Butler, who he understood was in the same hotel as himself in the Piazza di Spagna when the answer was interrupted by the

discharge of my pistol. The circumstances which ensued was an admirable excuse for his waiting upon me in a christian and philanthropic point of view; and the vehemence of his surprise may be imagined, when he discovered me to be that identical young soldier who had experienced his Eastern hospitality, and returned it by shooting his intended son-in-law.

“*Corpo di Bacco!*” exclaimed the Colonel, affecting extraordinary pleasure at recognizing me after his real astonishment had subsided; “Ensign Butler metamorphosed into a Roman; and shedding his blood like a gladiator in the amphitheatre! how blind I must have been not to remember you; but,” continued he shaking his head, “ ’tis no use attempting to disguise our failings, we are going down the hill of life Mr. Butler; and are less curious and observant of things than formerly.”

Here after several mutual civilities were interchanged, he ran on with a number of congratulations at finding me restored to what he called my paternal honours; and lastly asked, what he came ostensibly to enquire, how

I felt myself, and what encouragement I had received from my physician ?

I informed him, that I felt very weak and feverish ; but much more disturbed in mind from not being able to discover any reason for my life having been so determinedly attempted.

“ *Per Bacco !* ” responded Landon, if reasons were as plentiful as blackberries, you would scarce find a good one for every *stilettata* which is given in Rome : avarice, jealousy, hatred, love, revenge, all find constant work for the knives of these dastardly devils. Why there was my excellent and intimate friend Lord Allgame—perhaps you know Allgame ?

“ I have not that pleasure.”

“ Well, no matter, I may find an opportunity of introducing you to him ; but his Lordship you must know, not to mince matters, is a terrible dog amongst the women. In such matters he is worse than an infidel or a Hebrew Jew ; no preserve safe, no sanctity, connubial, or conventional inviolate ; and in short, betwixt ourselves, he is a sad *roué*.”

“ Well Mr. Butler, you must know, that

it was whispered about Rome, that my Lord Allgame, was on rather intimate terms with the fair niece of a certain young cardinal, whose friendship I have the honour to possess, and shall therefore not mention his name. But whether there was any foundation for the scandal or not, true and of verity it is, that as he was ascending the steps of the —— one fine evening, he was stuck in the back before he could say, Sir—I thank you.”

“ And killed ?” demanded I.

“ No, nor yet injured ; for his stays, and the fortunate approach of some person saved his life. He however, took the commendable precaution of leaving with all dispatch the dominions of his Holiness.”

From this, the Colonel rambled into a disquisition upon the good society to be found at Rome during the season ; and from thence, to that only subject I dreaded his mentioning ; namely, his daughter. Nevertheless, he did talk of her, and at considerable length too without once alluding, even in the most distant manner, to my unfortunate encounter with Wyndham. So studiously indeed did he avoid this disagree-

able theme, that I knew not whether to conclude, that the circumstance had almost passed from his remembrance; or that he had handled so delicate a matter in the most masterly manner possible.

“ Ah, Mr. Butler,” said he, “ how time slips away! I never see an old friend, without regarding him as another monitory mercury, or mile-stone on the road to eternity. Let me see, it is scarcely five years since I last saw you; and since then my daughter whom I think you have seen, has gained and lost a husband. You must have seen, if not known, Sir Charles d’Eville?”

“ I have often heard of Sir Charles,” replied I, “ but am not aware of ever having met him.”

“ I forgot,” continued the Colonel, “ that you have but lately entered into the possession of your noble fortune, and cannot therefore be expected to know many of those who are accustomed to move in good society. However it matters not now whether or not you did know Sir Charles; he is dead and gone, poor fellow; dead and gone; though but lately the

gayest of the gay, and most unquestionable dictator in matters of *haut ton*. Poor fellow, Lords Sedly, Allgame, and others of that stamp finished him ; rendering my unhappy daughter, a widow scarcely nine months after her union."

I expressed my sorrow at Lady d'Eville's bereavement, and as I had heard of the inroads which libertinism and a constant round of gaiety had made upon Sir Charles's constitution, I could not help observing, that almost as many fell victims to the fatigues of fashion, as to less excusable dissipation.

"*Il n'admet point de doute!*" replied he, shrugging his shoulders, and shaking his head with a look of affected concern ; "and we, Mr. Butler, who are in the ring, are after all cursedly to be pitied. But what Sir can be done—how can a person fond of good society, escape its cares and duties ? As for poor Lady d'Eville, however much she may have loved her husband, she certainly hated the arduous duties imposed upon her by that exalted and fashionable circle in which Sir Charles moved ; and I must confess, that during her viduity, which does not exceed seven

months, she appears in my eyes ten times more blooming and beautiful than she did during her honeymoon."

This, I thought very likely; and was about to have told him so, had not the Colonel suddenly changed the conversation, and enquired whether the newspaper reports were true that I had declined standing for the county of Northumberland, from not having obtained the support of the Marquis of ———

I assured him, there was so far from being any truth in these statements, that on the contrary the noble Marquis had tendered me his powerful support; and my reasons for declining the honour of representing the county, were purely private and personal.

"I am delighted, to have it in my power," replied the Colonel, "to have it my power, to contradict any such prejudicial reports; although few people now a days believe or care what they see in the newspapers. I have not the honour of being personally acquainted with the Marquis, but believe him to be a true and influential friend. However, I will inflict upon you no more of my loquacity; it can

do you no good in your present state; and moreover, I have to see Sir James Leatherhead, before he sets out for Naples; which he does at half past three."

Accordingly, the Colonel, who had pulled out his repeater in a great hurry, as he spoke the last few words now wished me a gracious good morrow; leaving me to marvel, how one advanced in years could pursue with such ardour that phantom fashion; which like an iris is ever changing, evanescent, and unsatisfactory. He had scarcely been gone five minutes, before Foster who had been out purchasing some cameos and mosaics returned; and much was he amused at the account I gave of my interview.

"It is singular enough, you should meet in the Colosseum," said he; "and so that beauteous young widow, whose eyes have been dazzling before mine all the blessed morning, is that identical Miss Landon, of whom I have heard you make such frequent mention?"

"The same, or rather Lady d'Eville; and unless very much changed since I saw her, her beauty was not likely to escape your impertinent curiosity."

" Why impertinent ? was the human face divine made to be hidden under a bushel ? go to, as our ancestors would say. Were I ever to turn pagan, I should worship woman ; nay, I think he that does not more or less do so, is a heathen. There is nothing could sooner tempt me to become a Catholic, than the gallant reverence which they show the meek, the beautiful Madonna. Ave Maria ! Ave Maria !"

" What nonsense you talk," cried I, wishing to cut short a rant which was likely to end in some impiety ; " and so you think Agnes Landon, (Lady d'Eville I mean) very beautiful ?"

" Ha ! lies the wind in that quarter ?" said Foster, with an arch expression of countenance.

" Why, in sober truth then I will venture my reputation for ever, as a judge of face and figure ; that her charms are both matured and multiplied since you saw her. She was then, I think you told me, some fifteen or sixteen ; a skipping-rope, piano torturing, bread and butter Miss—but now Butler ; oh ! if you had but seen her in the Colosseum ; such dignity !

such a mien ! such sentiment in the very tread of her well moulded foot ! and such eyes ! Heaven and earth ! such annihilating, celibacy confounding eyes never flashed within that ruined ring. And when your fortunately effective pistol flashed athwart the gloom, believe me it hardly surpassed the gleam which shot from hers."

" What, her pistol ?" said I sarcastically.

" Ay, her brace of them ; and better duellers were never levelled at mortal man : happy the man who has such travelling companions. However, I will say no more, than that I shall be happy to be your second, and no principal in this matter ; besides you know, I have a little affair of honour myself in hand."

" What do you mean ?"

" Were I a gambler, I would wager fifty pounds of your own money, that you could guess if you chose. Why, if you are ever to defend that unfortunate carcass of yours by the shield of matrimony, from lead and steel ; where will you ever find such a palladium as this Lady d'Eville ? She is Minerva

herself personified, with twice her beauty, and a title surpassing that of the $\gamma\lambda\alpha\nu\kappa\omega\pi\eta$ or any other, in my eyes ; since it cost as you confess, three lacs of rupees and may be the means of saving half as much per annum to you and your heirs for ever.”

“Preserve me,” cried I, “you have again got upon your old theme of matrimony ; in dis- coursing of which, you are about as agreeable, as those minstrels I have seen, who perform upon a bladder and a string.”

“Better rough music than none ; as the cornuto said,” replied Foster ; “I will how- ever promise, never again to mention it, if you will promise to visit Lady d’Eville as soon as you are sufficiently recovered.”

“Agreed ; and I shall certainly do so as soon as practicable.”

This, in a few days, I was permitted to put into execution by my surgeon ; for as the Colonel and his daughter occupied apartments in the same hotel ; so trifling an exertion, could not, it will be believed, retard my recovery which proceeded very satisfactorily.

The Colonel, who was seated alone writing,

appeared very glad to see us ; and being in high spirits, he lost no time in explaining the reason. This was, his having just received good news from his Bombay agents, who, instead of sending him, as desired, bills of exchange from India, had consigned, on his account a large quantity of indigo, which had turned out a most profitable speculation. He had hardly finished this piece of information, and shaken hands with Foster, whom I introduced to him, than a door opened, and his daughter entered. It was clear, that she had not been aware of the presence of any visitors ; for she was about to have retired, had not Landon stopped her, saying, with some formality,

“ My dear, you must not run away ; this is our old acquaintance, Mr. Butler, to whom I need scarcely introduce you.”

Lady d’Eville’s eye, ran quickly over my features ; and the colour quickly left her cheek as she received me with a distant civility, which struck me as being less cold than she intended from our having been so unexpectedly brought together. I knew what was passing in the breast of the once frolicsome Agnes. Landon and I felt equally disconcerted. For several minutes

we sat in harrowing silence ; a purgatory of embarrassment, which was fortunately rendered in some degree tolerable, by an impetuous torrent of talk which was poured from the Colonel. This was chiefly bestowed upon Foster, he being the person Landon justly considered as the most likely to be impressed by the parade of his fashionable alliance and acquaintances. At length, I ventured to express the pleasure I experienced in meeting her Ladyship ; with my regret at having been the unhappy means of occasioning her so much alarm in the Colosseum.

“ I am glad,” said she, “ that you are so far recovered as to say so ; I must confess I was exceedingly frightened, especially when I heard that a gentleman was killed ; and though, Sir, we have had some experience in blood-shed—that is—” continued she, somewhat flurried lest she should have expressed herself vaguely—“ that is, we have heard of so many assassinations during our residence in Italy, that the terrible events of the night shocked me less than they would once have done.”

The first part of this speech, rung in my ears like the anathema of an accusing angel ; and the ‘ experience of bloodshed,’ to which

conscience told me she alluded, rendered me not only dumb, but weak, and deadly pale.

This escaped not Lady d'Eville's searching eye, who said,

"I hope, Mr. Butler, you have not been too venturesome in leaving your apartments. You look white and exhausted."

"No," replied I, with a ghastly smile, "'twas but a passing pang; though much reduced by bleeding—I am nearly well, and—"

Here, to my extreme satisfaction, I was cut short by the Colonel; who, turning most opportunely to his daughter, burst out with—

"Agnes, my dear, who *was* Sir James Leatherhead's first wife?"

"Indeed I can't tell;—let me see—I think I've heard you say, she was a Miss Jackson."

"Right—quite right," cried the Colonel, "I knew it ended in *son*. Well, Mr. Foster, this Miss Jackson, you must know, was the only daughter of a married plebeian in the city; who, of course, had never seen good society; but, being desirous to push forward his daughter, (as was quite natural,) he gave a large fortune to Sir James."

And thus Landon went on, with a volubility we need not imitate; and which bored poor Foster most unmercifully, since, on so short an acquaintance, he was forced to listen with attentive resignation.

Whether it was, that I acquired courage from perceiving Lady d'Eville had intended no bitter allusion to that unhappy feat of bloodshed, which had wrung as many drops from my heart as hers; or, that she, having perceived the cause of my agitation, wished, with delicate compassion, to heal a hurt she had unintentionally given; we both now entered into conversation with a greater degree of frankness. And before taking my leave, I felt a grateful admiration for one, who seemed more induced to pity than spurn a person, whom many will allow she had sufficient reason for avoiding.

Much as I had expected from Foster's panegyric on Lady d'Eville, I was much surprized at finding the change which had taken place in her manners and appearance. The giddy hoyden, had (as he justly described her) grown into a beautiful and dignified matron: her ideas were exalted, her feelings chastened; and

in her deportment and expression, there was something so genuine, unaffected, and yet majestic, that she resembled what we may imagine Zenobia would have been if deprived of the too masculine shades of her character.

CHAPTER XII.

“ There’s some ill planet reigns ;
I must be patient, ’till the heavens look
With an aspect more favourable.”

Winter’s Tale.

WE became, in time, very intimate with Colonel Landon and his interesting daughter, made many expeditions about Rome and the neighbouring places, and it was even agreed that we should set out together for Naples. It were folly, or the foulest affectation for me, when I am so near the end of the adventures of my younger years, to deny that I found Lady d’Eville, a most agreeable companion.

I believe there are feelings long latent in our

strange nature, which, by winding themselves round the heart, produce in time, powerful effects to which at first sight, they appear quite inadequate. So have I seen seeds which have long lain neglected, vegetate ; or a silken thread by means of a multiplicity of pulleys, be able to raise a ponderous cannon-ball. And thus it was, with regard to Agnes Landon. For, although so much improved in mind and appearance, having settled down into a sensible matron, with perceptions, perhaps, less vivid—affections less easily roused, but a judgment more matured and prejudices more softened ; there was still woven around her heart sympathies of early days which she herself was not aware of, and which, when aroused, were fostered instead of feared. In plainer terms, if Agnes had at first abhorred me for unwillingly depriving her of a husband, she pitied the bitter repentance and remorse which pursued me for having destroyed my friend ; and when we both talked of Wyndham's worth, and both shed the tear of pity over his memory, there existed a powerful bond of sympathy which was not likely to render us less interesting in each other's eyes. But, besides

this, there was a similarity in our destinies ; for on her virgin heart had been struck the stamp of Wyndham, nor could time or twenty marriages efface that cherished impression, whilst mine had perhaps suffered a still ruder shock. Although I could never again idolize humanity, even in its perfection, as I had once done ; I could not fail to appreciate the worth of such a woman as Lady d'Eville.

To repeat therefore, what I said on commencing this chapter ; it would be folly or affectation to deny, that I found an agreeable companion in Agnes ; friend Foster's lectures on the prudence of preserving my estates and personal security entered frequently into my mind, during our various expeditions about the eternal city. I must confess that the oftener I was thrown into Lady d'Eville's company, the oftener they returned.

Six weeks had now been spent by us on such a friendly footing, that we were very seldom separate, even our meals being regularly eaten together. During this time, I obtained a deeper insight into Lady d'Eville's character, and the more was I surprised that poor Wyndham should have possessed so much keener percep-

tions of human nature than myself, with the good fortune of never having a rival for that generous and lofty heart which he had so easily obtained.

These sentiments it may be presumed, soon banished the base mercenary thought, if such a one ever existed abstractly in my mind, of espousing Lady d'Eville for the sake of securing myself from the jealousy of the Lumleys. In short before that we left Rome for Naples, I was fairly enamoured of this fascinating woman, not certainly with that ardour, of which the fervid heart is only susceptible when in its blessed bloom; but with that calm deliberate admiration, which ripened feeling when matured by the harsh experience of a hollow and garish world, mellows down its youthful ideal dreams into reality less dazzling doubtless than its golden visions, but less likely to be overcast by gloomy disappointment.

But to disburden my mind to her who dreamed not of my intentions—this was an overpowering task. Yes, I call it a task, for assuredly it is widely different, for one in the full tide of passion, to pour forth his love and vows of con-

stancy ; than after reasoning himself (as it were) into love, to divulge the secret in proper and persuasive phrase. In such cases, our old Eton Grammar gives notable advice in one of its grammatical instances—advising those to write who are ashamed to speak ; and I believe at school, many who applied the rule, have acted on the example in after life.

Such was the idea which entered my mind when after many ineffectual attempts to speak my sentiments, I at length mustered courage to transmit them in a letter. This I forwarded by my servant, fearing to entrust Foster with the lengths my attachment had carried me, from the raillery which I knew would be the consequence.

The suspense with which I waited for an answer, was I suppose about equal to any other person's in similar circumstances. My confusion was however unspeakable when after receiving none, I was summoned according to a previous appointment, to attend Lady d'Eville and a party to visit the lake of Avernus and the adjoining Grotto of the Cumæan Sibyl, with all the other wonders usually seen in such an expedition.

Foster had his reasons for always leaving Lady d'Eville under my charge as much as possible, as I had mine for engrossing her company; but whether the Colonel felt satisfaction in the advances which he must have perceived I made his daughter, or was too much taken up with the new acquaintances he had already picked up in Naples, I know not. Yet so it was, that he seldom laid any obstacle to our intimacy, and as rarely interfered in our conversation.

On this occasion, we set off in three carriages; the Colonel, his daughter, Foster and myself in one; the others filled with persons whose names I do not remember. Unfortunately, I sat exactly fronting Lady d'Eville, and there was an agitation in her look and manner, which escaped the notice of no one but her father who happened to occupy the same seat.

Our discourse was scant, and about as dry as the whirling dust that swept along the road which at length brought us to Virgil's romantic tomb, and the wonderful grotto of Posilipo, into the chilly gloom of which to my

satisfaction and the relief of Agnes we afterwards entered. This marvellous excavation, if wholly a work of art ; marvellous, considering that it was effected when gunpowder was unknown, excites the surprise of every traveller ; but on the present occasion it gave rise to a dispute betwixt Landon and Foster as to the magnitude of the works of respective countries.

Foster stoutly maintained that nothing could surpass those of the Romans, although he admitted that some of their most gigantic undertakings were less imposing than those of other nations.

“ Look at the astonishing aqueducts, and sewers of Rome,” said he, “ but above all her roads and bridges which extended not through Italy alone, but over the whole habitable globe.”

“ I grant you,” replied the Colonel, “ that many of their works were of astonishing grandeur, especially those you have now particularized ; but consider those of the East which I have had an opportunity of examining. The pyramids, the Lake Mœris, however it was

formed whether by excavating or damming, as is I think most probable ; and then the magnificent embanking of the Euphrates, with the stupendous wall and canal of the Celestial Empire. But talking of canals, see what an astonishing work for an individual, is that lately finished by the Duke of Bridgewater ; it certainly surpasses in utility, if not in magnitude any of those works executed by Herodes Atticus with the treasures which his father so fortunately discovered.”

The Colonel after this allusion to that truly great man, ran on with a tedious discourse upon the caves of Elephanta and Elora, and many other things ; all which was apparently listened to both by Lady d’Eville and myself, although our thoughts were very differently engaged.

According to established custom, we were soon obliged to quit our carriages and mount the ponies and asses which had been previously sent forward to the end of the lane which leads to the lake. Here the ludicrous appearance of the equestrian party gave rise to much mirth and humour, which proved very agree-

able to me, though I joined not in it, from the attention of the party being diverted from observing how ill we were at ease. I ventured to ride close to Lady d'Eville, anxious to obtain an opportunity of speaking to her in private; but this did not occur until we had reached the lake, when complaining of the uneasiness of her saddle she relinquished her patient palfrey, and I imitating her example offered her my arm. This however she refused, alleging as a reason the length of her riding-hood, though I could perceive from her manner that she had some other one.

We now entered on a grassy, well shaded walk, which winds for some time round the margin of that lonely lake; and then turning into a delightful little glade on the left brings you to a long dark excavation ending in several tenebrious chambers which have been dignified by the attractive title of the Sibyl's Grotto.

This was an opportunity not to be lost; and with a faltering voice, I enquired whether Lady d'Eville had received a letter, which I had taken the liberty of sending her.

"I think Mr Butler," replied she, "you might have perceived that I have received your letter from the distress it has occasioned me. What encouragement can I possibly have given you, that considering the shortness of our acquaintance, and the few months which have elapsed since I was bereaved of a husband, you should venture to tender such unfeeling, I might call them audacious proposals."

"If I have offended you Lady d'Eville," said I, "the only excuse which I shall plead is your beauty and your virtue. But if I have trespassed upon the time usually allowed to sorrow, impute this venial transgression to the ardour of my passion. To fear to offend, where we have every thing to hope, is so natural, and even selfish, as to exculpate any person from a deficiency of feeling and respect towards one who is all worthy of them. Unhappily for me, our acquaintance has been short; but are we to measure the ravages of the heart by dates and days?—The same sun which gradually renders swarthy the parched traveller, can strike him to the

earth with the fervour of the thunderbolt. I assure you Lady d'Eville, I believed myself inaccessible to love ; and had I not met you, I might have given the world the strongest demonstration of my apathy."

"In what manner pray?"

"By voluntarily delivering up in a few years, almost everything I have in the world to my mortal enemies ; for I must acquaint you, since I have not done so before, that by my late uncle's whimsical will, I am obliged not only to marry in the space of ten years, but moreover, to unite myself to a lady of title, or else forfeit my estates. Half that period of probation has already past, and with as little regret shall I see the remainder expire, should you cruelly persist in rejecting the honest tribute of my affections."

The expressive features of Lady d'Eville became instantly overcast ; her large eyes flashed fire, and drawing herself up with extreme dignity, she scornfully answered—

"Honest indeed ! methinks Sir, that your honesty and prudence are about a par, when you venture to confess that this *honest* tribute

of your affections is dictated by anxiety for the preservation of your property. You have, however, formed a miserable and mistaken opinion of my character, if you imagine me a fitting subject to be cajoled thus easily. My mind revolts at your calculating selfishness; and it would have been difficult for your worst enemy to have persuaded me, that the bosom friend of the unfortunate Wyndham, could ever entertain such venal, and such disgraceful views."

No rebuke ever entered more freezingly my heart than this terrible one, for I felt conscious it was quite unwarranted; and as soon as my emotion permitted me, I anxiously endeavoured to vindicate myself.

"By my honour Lady d'Eville!" cried I, "and that Heaven which hears the vow, you do me extreme injustice. I were indeed unworthy of the ever-cherished friendship of Alfred Wyndham, and worse than a traitor to your happiness, could I for an instant harbour the sordid, the dishonourable motives you impute to me. If I mentioned the singular ban under which I lie either to marry

or resign my fortune, it was done without the slightest intention of inducing you to hearken to what my conscience tells me is the dictate of a pure and disinterested passion. No, the allusion was made from its being the only proof which henceforth can and shall be given to you and the world of the contempt I entertain for wealth, honour, and even of the sex, if you despise me. Is it not then equally cruel and unjust, for you to interpret that proof of my disinterestedness, into a selfish, a fiendish motive?"

"When the proof is afforded, my opinion may be altered ;" said the lady drily. "And yet I may tell you, that my ideas of your good sense would not be strengthened by seeing you divest yourself of a noble fortune for an antipathy, as culpable, and ridiculous, as the whim of your capricious relative. Believe me, Sir, you will find many amiable patrons who may render life agreeable, without making any such absurd sacrifice. On me it would be lost, however complete the conviction it might afford me of your sincerity ; for my lot in life has been twice unfortunately

cast, and I am unwilling again to run the hazard of the hymeneal die."

"Were you aware, Lady d'Eville," replied I, "of the pangs your words occasion, - you would pity and not punish thus a wretch whose ingenuousness has unfortunately incurred your displeasure. You admit, that when that proof (which you nevertheless reprobate) is offered, your opinion may be altered; and those kind words have more than repaid all that your scorn and unfair construction of my sentiments had inflicted. Oh, say that I may entertain but a hope, even a distant hope of your being mine, and as soon as the distance which we are from England will permit, you shall have no reason to question the sincerity of my love."

"You will act unwisely Sir," responded her ladyship, with an inexorable firmness of manner, "in entertaining any such hopes; and still more so in taking any rash and ridiculous steps regarding your property, from the idea that it would influence my conduct. For although the suspicion that has arisen in my mind, and which you so strenuously disavow

might be removed, there is nevertheless, a wide gulph betwixt holding a person honest, and having him for a husband."

This was spoken in an inflexible manner, which precluded all chance of success; and without making any observation but biting my lips till the blood moistened my parched tongue, we rejoined the rest of the party. They were just about to enter the Grotto, under the guidance of two or three half naked noisy fellows, who carried blazing flambeaux. I was heartily glad when this disagreeable excursion was finished, and with looks and feelings of utter dejection, I studiously shunned conversation with every one. Feigning a head ache, I then took the earliest opportunity of repairing to my own apartments, and threw myself on my bed a martyr to extreme misery and mortification.

As I thus lay hopeless and almost helpless, I took a hasty and delirious review of my wretched existence which had been one continued blight and malediction; and as I did so my heart was like the patriarch's dove which could find no resting place for the sole

of her foot, and was forced again to return to bondage—I felt isolated from my race, save by interest and sycophancy ; and as the unhappy, who foolishly venture to reason on their miseries, are never likely to derive much consolation from the balance of philosophy, (since she teaches us rather to forget than recall them,) so I upon this occasion, fretted and goaded my spirit into a state, a hundred times more insupportable than chagrin had already placed me. Had I but possessed the fortitude to attempt to forget my misfortunes I might perhaps have saved myself yet another draught of the bitter waters of sorrow. But alas, how idly do I dream ! to forget, to attempt to forget ! Oh oblivion thou sole repose, and substantial shadow of the soul ; if wit, wealth, or wisdom, could win one drop from thy chalice, who would not be a suppliant ! if not so, why ye great ones of the globe, why tremble at the gloomy triumphs of the tomb ? It is dangerous to give even reason too much scope ; for it is like bending too far a keen blade which will inevitably snap and wound. She

has her own proper range, and beyond that is as vain and impotent as the sting of viper against steel. If we once loosen too far the reins which direct her path, we like Phaeton with his father's steeds, lose all control ; ruin and conflagration ensue, and from demi-gods, we sink into monsters, barbarians.

Thus was it with me ; for from my own miseries I now dared blasphemously to reason, or rather rave concerning the injustice and indifference of the Deity, instead of deducing from his perfections a becoming awe and reverence during infliction ; and thoughts, dark, impious, and detestable, burnt within my bosom like the poisonous breath of hell.

“ It shall have an end ! ” exclaimed I, starting up and snatching a razor from my dressing-case ; “ I have been long enough the mockery of man, and a Helot in the eyes of heaven ! Here, here shall it end ! ”

As I uttered this, and clutched the deadly instrument with a stern determination, which would have left little doubt as to the issue ; the thought occurred, (suggested perhaps by

pride, the last vanity which leaves our clay) that the world would say, I had destroyed myself in a fit of phrenzy.

"And if they do say so," exclaimed I, "what will it matter when the grave has closed over me? and yet since it has presumptuously been denied, that man's boasted prerogative of reason can light him to an untimely tomb; I will die deliberately, and devoutly—yes, shudder reader, for I said devoutly."

Accordingly I took out a sheet of paper, and had just finished a hasty note to Foster, explaining that I had put an end to myself during no fit of insanity, but from a calm conviction of the folly of living merely to be miserable,—when my hand was suddenly seized, and the open razor thrown violently under the bed, by that very individual whom I was addressing.

"Gracious heaven!" ejaculated Foster, whose face was completely pale with terror, and his frame trembling, "is it possible, that I was nearly being a witness of your committing so rash, so dreadful a crime! Oh—Butler, what can have prompted you to think of this shock-

ing deed—you certainly are labouring under some lamentable aberration of mind !”

I could make no answer; but the gloomy and remorseless mood, which had thus far held me up with feelings of adamant and nerves of iron, now passed slowly away before the accents of my *only* friend, like a sable cloud unfolding the wan moon; and pointing to the scrawled sheet, I burst into an hysterical flood of tears, and dropped my head upon my hands.

The spell of the demon was broken; it was exorcised from my soul, and never, to a long parched soil, fell, with more softening, vivifying freshness, the first drops of precious rain, than felt my heart relieved by those tears. Foster’s too flowed plentifully, as clasping me in his arms he muttered incoherent thanks to heaven for his providential interference.

“ I will read the paper presently,” replied Foster, “ but first give me some token that you are sufficiently sane to be left at your own disposal;—say something to assure me; but one kind word.”

“ Read,” said I, “ and form your own conclusion—”

“ On the condition that you pledge your word not to make any further attempt at violence.”

“ I do promise ; and being able to do so, is, itself, a sufficient guarantee for my sanity ; but I beseech you to help me to my bed, for I am painfully nervous and weaker than a child. And now draw the curtains close around me, that I may be left to calm my troubled thoughts.”

Foster did this with exceeding kindness, but without speaking ; and after casting a wistful look upon me as he carefully tucked in the curtains, so as to exclude the light, he sat down at the head of the bed and began to peruse my paper. An hour, or perhaps more, passed in perfect silence ; when I said,

“ What has this evening occurred, Foster, must never be mentioned.”

“ I cannot make any such promise at present,” answered Foster after some hesitation ; “ I will, however, engage myself thus far—that the matter shall never be entrusted by me to any one, without a cogent reason ; and even then in such a manner as never to do you an injury.”

“ What do you mean ?” cried I sharply, “ I will have no such shuffling reservations ; you shall either pledge me your word of honour, never to disclose that intention which you so unfortunately prevented ; or else never speak to me more.”

“ Say not, unfortunately prevented, my esteemed companion and friend,” replied Foster, “ consider what you were about to do ; in the full flush of youth, health and fortune to throw up all from a want of mental control and appear before your Maker, clothed in imperfection, impenitence, and sin. To sacrifice your reason, your religion as bond slaves to a morbid melancholy, which rests but on an imaginary basis ; and would be completely overthrown by one resolute effort worthy of a strong minded man : as bursting the cerements of sleep dispells those visions which have caused our flesh to creep and our souls to tremble.”

Here I uttered a groan, which prevented not Foster continuing in the same earnest manner into which he had gradually kindled.

“ Consider, dear Butler, that you were about to stamp your name either as a lunatic

or moral coward; and if I may venture to allude to an excusable emotion of self-pride, you were about to furnish your bitter enemies with the most glorious of triumphs. Besides, but for this most valuable document, what a dangerous position might you have placed one who is proud of calling himself your friend; for what proofs could I have adduced for my innocence of your death. Unquestionably I should have had the infamy attached to me by the world, not only of having devised the previous schemes for your destruction, but at last executing one too successfully with my own hands. When you reflect upon all this, do not therefore say that I unfortunately prevented you disgracing your name and insulting the authority of God; nor yet be so unreasonable as to demand from me any further promise than what I have already given, and which is sufficient to satisfy your jealousy of this business ever being known."

"I am in no temper to listen to sermons," replied I, "you never refused to keep any thing secret save this, and I not only have a

right but will be inexorable in requiring your silence. Better to have been now a corpse ; than with my other miseries, to dread the possibility of being pointed at as a baffled suicide."

"The alternative which you propose is unjust," said Foster "and it will be a miserable thing for me should you adhere to your resolution ; for mine too is taken, and I again swear that if ever I reveal the transactions of this day they shall never be told to one who means you harm. If you will require more, I cannot compromise the dignity of my own honour and your future happiness, by complying with your demand."

" You know my stubborn disposition, Foster, and are foolish, I might say ungrateful to put it thus openly to the test. I shall however do nothing more rashly for this day at least ; but you shall have three days to make up your mind on the alternative I have proposed. And now Sir, be so good as to send for a surgeon, as I feel exceedingly indisposed."

" Butler," answered Foster in an upbraiding

tone, “there are words sharper than razors; what have I ever done to merit the ingrate’s brand of infamy?”

“Your promise?”

“I have yours,” replied he, “not to attempt any further violence, and will have it repeated e’er I do your bidding.”

“Well ’tis repeated,” said I peevishly.

“Enough,” answered he leaving the room, “and if Heaven prosper honest wishes, you shall e’er long repent the injustice you have done me.”

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Have you not love enough to bear with me,
When that rash humour which my mother gave me
Makes me forgetful ?”

Julius Cæsar.

BEFORE I could make any reply to the last words which fell from Foster, he had quitted my chamber; and I had leisure to ponder upon his strange conduct, and form conjectures on his possible motives for refusing so reasonable a request, as silence regarding my late infamous intentions. The more I revolved the matter in my mind, the more perplexed was I to find a satisfactory reason for his con-

duct. Remembering, however, some trifling difference in his manner, more especially since leaving Rome, with the fact that he had lately received several letters, the contents of which he had never thought proper to divulge; (a thing very unusual on his part)—I could not help suspecting that the Lumleys had bought him over to their interest, and that he only waited some convenient opportunity for effecting my destruction.

This horrible suspicion plainly accounted for the attempt made upon my life by Sears, with whom I now doubted not Foster had maintained a correspondence, and engaged for that purpose. And then his being the first to recognize the face of that villain, appeared in its true light, as a skilful *ruse* more likely to deceive me than if he had pretended forgetfulness like myself. All this was confirmed by the late constraint and change in his manner, which I have above alluded to; and I had therefore little doubt but my confidant and secretary, with all his tears and canting speeches was but a wolf in sheeps' clothing. Nor did I doubt that a commission

de lunatico enquirendo would assuredly on my arrival in England be instituted at the suit of the Lumleys; in which his important evidence respecting my late attempt at self-destruction, combined with those instances of extravagance, I had shewn towards the feline species, would afford a fair chance of providing me with legal guardians and transferring my estates to those heartless and insatiable wretches.

There was only this wanting to render me supremely miserable; for ever since my acquaintance with Foster I had said to myself, this world is not utterly a desert, and there may be a friendship surpassing even the love of women, such as mine and Wyndham's was. Now however, life presented but one blank uncheering path; and so extreme was the sorrow and indignation which inflamed me against my treacherous friend, that but for the arrival of the surgeon, I believe I might have been tempted to break my word, and have rendered his attendance quite unnecessary. As may easily be guessed, this limb of the faculty had some difficulty in deciding upon the nature of my ailment, though he judiciously

enough perhaps, advised me to lose a little blood, and to be kept as quiet as possible. I was moreover enjoined not to see any one save my servant, and albeit this injunction extended not to Foster, he to my extreme disgust, and the complete confirmation of every suspicion, never once called to enquire after me. I passed a sleepless miserable night, and next morning was waited on at an early hour by Colonel Landon ; early indeed, for I had scarcely breakfasted.

He expressed himself very desirous to see me, but this my servant according to order refused ; and it was not until I was informed of the urgency of his applications that he was able to obtain admittance.

As the Colonel drew near my bed, there was a serious anxiety depicted on his swarthy countenance quite unusual ; and all the politeness of which he was master, could not conceal some symptoms of embarrassment whilst he enquired after my health.

“ Dear Sir,” said he, “ I was quite shocked to hear that you were a second time tied to your

bed ; how unlucky it is that you should be a prisoner in places which abound with such interesting scenes, and excursions much more agreeable even than the one we but yesterday so much enjoyed.”

I was about to have bid him good morning, but the abortive civility ended in a groan of intolerable anguish.

“ Don’t attempt to move—don’t attempt any unnecessary ceremony, for I perceive that your weakness and suffering are most distressing. Indeed I have to apologise for intruding upon you without the explicit permission of your physician ; nor would I have presumed on doing so, had I not something of great importance to talk over.”

“ No apology, Colonel Landon is necessary where there is no intrusion ; besides I am much better than I was yesterday, and both able and willing to listen to whatever you have to say.”

Landon answered with a bow, and perceiving my valet, begged that we might be private ; a hint which James immediately took,

whilst I wondering what intelligence the loquacious Nabob could be fraught with, lay silently awaiting his fire.

“ My dear Mr. Butler,” said he laying his amber headed cane across the table and occupying a chair near my bed, “ I am as you know a man of few words; *pauca verba* is my motto, and something very like a dumb bell my crest. I come to the point, as our troops or seapoys who are equal to any Europeans upon earth, come to the charge; straight to the mark without flourish or preface. If on this occasion I tell you so, it is from no proneness on my part to be tedious and verbose, but in compliance with that indispensable code of civility which is binding on all who pride themselves as being men of honour, and upholders of the privileges of good society. To be plain, my dear Sir, I come here to acquaint you, that you have deeply and unjustifiably injured one of your warmest friends.”

“ I am at a loss, Colonel Landon, to guess whom you allude to, unless it be—”

“ Your secretary Mr. Foster?”

"Just so; and that he must be a villain and has betrayed me," cried I starting from my pillow, "will only be verified by every word you utter!"

"My dear Sir be calm, be composed; consider on your situation, otherwise I will not hold myself justifiable in proceeding further. That Mr. Foster is no villain,—has not betrayed you, nor ever sought any thing but your true interest, will I am sure appear, if you will listen patiently to the humble individual who has the honour of waiting upon you."

"Colonel Landon," replied I, "if you are come here as the bearer of any hostile message from that false and treacherous scoundrel, I tell you plainly and in a word, that I shall spurn it with the contempt which it deserves. To give satisfaction to a man of honour, where necessity requires such a step, has been, as you know, my unfortunate fate; but to permit a false-hearted, ungrateful villain, who owes me every kindness, to burnish up his sullied reputation by meeting me on a footing

of moral equality, would be a degradation and a pollution."

" Be calm my friend, and forgive me if I have broken too abruptly a subject which you cannot comprehend without listening to me patiently. Were matters as you describe them, Mr. Butler, no one could have greater horror than myself in conveying to you a hostile message: for I may without vanity affirm, that few are more punctilious than myself concerning the nicest distinctions of character and the privileges of good society. The only satisfaction which Mr. Foster requires is of a far different nature, and such as you will render him, unless you impress me with the belief of your being very unreasonable, which I know is not your real character."

" Pardon my again interrupting you, Colonel Landon; but since Mr. Foster seeks no such satisfaction, there is nothing else he need seek from me. You cannot learn those proofs which I possess of his baseness, without being made acquainted with family matters, which it would be improper to divulge; any inter-

ference therefore on your part must prove ineffectual."

" I shall be satisfied with respect to that Sir, when I have finished my business. And now since you have shewn as much opposition as possible to my advocating the cause of your friend, I beseech you to let me go on in my own way without further interruption ; otherwise I shall make but poor work of what I have undertaken, and besides, such unnecessary excitement is not unlikely to retard your recovery."

" Proceed Colonel," replied I, " you shall find me henceforth, a patient listener."

Here Landon pulled out some papers and letters which he arranged methodically on the table, and taking up a memorandum as a brief, he refreshed himself with an invigorating pinch of snuff, and thus proceeded :

" Well Sir, the cause of your very sudden and unfortunate quarrel with Mr. Foster, is his having refused to pledge himself to secrecy on this point; viz. that during a fit of despondency or fury, you threatened or actually

did intend to destroy yourself, (no very uncommon event certainly in good society, from the *ennui* and satiety which there prevails) and that in consequence of this refusal, and his acquainting me with these particulars, as also placing in my hands the accompanying document marked, B. 1. you accuse him of treachery and ingratitude."

My eyes must have glared with fury, as starting from my pillow, on recognizing this paper to be the same that I had scrawled when Foster found me, I exclaimed :

" Is it possible he has placed that letter in your hands ! Heavens, his infamy is blacker even than my imagination drew him ; assuredly is he thrice cursed by God as he is by me, for this incredible, most cruel perfidy. Miserable being that I am, why was I produced to be but a prey for every heartless scoundrel whom I have trusted. Surely I have worn my heart upon my sleeve for the very carrion crows of the world to peck at. I tell you Colonel Landon, that unless you intend harrowing my wretched feelings worse than I can bear, you will desist saying another word

in defence of the most fiendish being who ever assumed the sacred name of friend ; as you desire my further acquaintance, close your lips for ever on his abhorred name.”

“ Sincerely do I regret Mr. Butler, and for more reasons than one, that I am the means of thus agitating your mind. Much too, as I should regret losing your acquaintance and good opinion, I nevertheless think it incumbent upon every man, who considers himself a member of good society to execute to the best of his power, an affair of this nature when he has once taken it in hand ; as I do, (without intending any offence) that is the duty of every one at least to listen, however unlikely he is to be persuaded. Endeavour my dear Sir, to master your feelings, and I will finish as quickly as possible all I have to say. So to recapitulate ; the causes of misunderstanding which I have just now worded and read, as clearly I flatter myself as they could have been done by any Judge Advocate, form the whole basis of this lamentable misunderstanding ?”

“ No Sir, they form not a moiety, not a fraction of his crimes.”

“Eh? *Corpo di Bacco!* are you serious? are there then other charges to be preferred against him?”

“I prefer no charges; I merely tell you that you are ignorant of the greater part of his rascality; and it is my urgent request, if you are determined to proceed further in this loathsome matter, that you will bring it to a close as soon as possible.”

“I am sorry to hear such is the case,” replied Landon, indulging in another pinch, “Though you will excuse me saying, that I still fear you are somewhat prejudiced. Nevertheless, as in duty bound, I shall proceed to exculpate Mr. Foster, so far as I am empowered to do; and therefore to attempt this methodically, I must again recapitulate thus far, that one reason of your quarrel was, Mr. Foster’s refusing to give the pledge of secrecy which you required.”

Partly ashamed of the want of urbanity which I had shewn the Colonel in interrupting him so frequently, and partly from exhaustion, I threw my head back on the pillow, and waved my hand in such a manner as to assure

him I would remain silent. Landon was delighted to find some prospect of getting through a task which he cursed himself heartily for ever having undertaken, and in a more cheerful voice he thus continued.

“ You must allow Mr. Butler, that a man’s motives are best to be inferred from his actions; and if I prove (as I think I shall be able to do,) that your secretary had no other reason for acting as he has done, than the promotion of your welfare—you cannot refuse to look with equal candour and indulgence, on any other matters which at present induce you to form so unworthy an estimate of his character. From having perused this extraordinary paper, (marked B. 1.) I must of course be aware, that you have not only formed an attachment for my daughter, but gone the length of making her proposals. Of all this, till last night I was profoundly ignorant; and if I express some dissatisfaction on that head, it is simply because I regret you did not enlist my little services in your cause. You see Sir, I am a plain man, and one of few words; and I

will tell you candidly I see no reason why you should have imagined that I could entertain any objection to such an honourable, and I might add advantageous alliance for Lady d'Eville. True, she is her own mistress; is of sufficient years and independency in every sense of the word to be so; and therefore with her wishes as regards marriage, I have no right to interfere, further than to prevent her lowering herself in society. For with regard to that Sir, I think every parent has an indefeasible right to give an opinion. Of this however anon, as also the history of a low marriage which a silly sister of mine perpetrated; at present I have to explain Mr. Foster's reason for showing me this paper and entrusting me with all the circumstances thereto pertaining. You must know then, that he waited upon me yesterday evening in extreme dejection, and begged I would have the goodness to grant him a private interview. This I did there and then, as Lady d'Eville chanced to be from home. He then after extorting from me a pledge of confidence, acquainted me of every

thing that had passed betwixt you, and his reason for not granting your request."

"And pray what could that possibly be?"

"You shall judge whether it be not a satisfactory one, when you hear Mr. Foster speak for himself; for I took the precaution to jot down his very words as nearly as I could remember them. Let me see, B. 2.," and taking up another paper, he read as follows—
"My friend's affection for your daughter Sir, has been no secret to me, although he never thought proper to inform me of his intentions; and this document (alluding to B. 1.) which I place in your hands on the strength of your solemn promise of secrecy, proves as you will admit, that disappointed love was the unfortunate cause of his meditating that dreadful deed which I was the means of preventing. Now Sir," continued he, "I know my friend's disposition so well, that if his affections do light on any object, they are given with no common ardour or sincerity; and although disappointment is likely to prove insupportable to one of so susceptible a temperament, still his pride will prompt him to pine silently in

sorrow, or even perish, sooner than prosecute a nearly hopeless state. It is this conviction which induced me to deny Mr. Butler, for the first time in my life, what appeared to him but a reasonable request; and to inform you of what has this day occurred, in order that you may exert your influence in behalf of the best and most generous of men. Little does Lady d'Eville know Sir, the value of the heart she is crushing with her scorn."

"Such Mr. Butler, is the memorandum which I took of your Secretary's harangue, which contained many encomiums on your character; and so pressing were his solicitations that I should interfere with my daughter on your behalf, that I really believe if he had been her admirer he could not have expressed himself half so persuasively. Now Sir, your opinion of Mr. Foster, will I suspect have undergone some change?"

"What you relate Colonel Landon," replied I, "is so strange and improbable that I know not what to say."

"And yet all I have told you Mr. Butler, is literally true,—nay, should you imagine that I

have at all exaggerated matters, there is another person who can verify all I have told you."

"God forbid," cried I, "that another should know these circumstances,—who possibly can know them? You cannot have broken your promise, nor Foster have told them to another; who can know them?"

"My daughter, Sir, who it appears had returned much sooner than I expected, and unknown to either of us, sat in an adjoining apartment, and overheard every single syllable of our conversation."

"Oh, cursed fortune!" exclaimed I, striking my forehead, "this last buffet only was wanting to complete my misery; to have lived despised by the world were bliss compared to existence under the contempt of your cruel daughter. What a miserable wretch, Colonel Landon, do your eyes behold!"

"Nor will you ever be otherwise my dear friend, if you permit such extreme despondency to follow every disappointment through life. I, however, am not come here to read you a curtain lecture, but to exculpate to my utmost,

Foster, whom I candidly believe you have ill used. In the next place then (for I have not yet finished) he conceives that your good opinions may have been partially estranged from him by reason of some reserve on his part of late. You nod assent, and I shall therefore conclude that he was not mistaken. But before I proceed to explain the reason of this, I may premise that it was necessary for Mr. Foster to enable me to do so by acquainting me with as much of your personal affairs as his faith and duty would permit. God knows I have but little curiosity in other persons concerns, but such confidence on his part enables me, I am glad to say, to venture a guess as to the instigator of that assassination which gave us all such terrible alarm ; and you so much suffering.”

“ Ha ! solve me but that, Colonel Landon, and every suspicion which at present prepossesses me against the man I believed to be a brother, shall vanish like frost-work in the sun.”

“ Is it possible, Mr. Butler,” replied the Colonel with much dignity, “ that you can for an instant entertain the unworthy thought that Mr. Foster was implicated in that accursed business ?

Come, come, I see your judgment is indeed blinded by prejudice ; but I trust soon to set that matter clear enough. Let me see, B. 3. Aye here it is, a letter from Miss Mulgrave to Mr. Foster. I have given my word only to read the paragraphs underscored in red ink, the remainder being, doubtlessly, matters of a very different description, but you may read it yourself, or I will do it for you just as you please."

I requested him to read it, which he did as follows :

" In my last I advised you to beware of your esteemed friend's safety and your own, without explaining my reasons for apprehension. I trust that you obeyed me in not saying a syllable to Mr. Butler on the subject, for were he to suspect himself beset, the warning might be traced to me, and the consequences dreadful.

" Since I sent you that warning, however, my suspicions have been strengthened by the frequent interviews which have occurred betwixt Lumley and my brother ; and the extreme precaution they have taken to keep them as secret as possible. But, besides this, you must know that my brother disappeared altogether, and neither my mother nor myself could disco-

ver the slightest trace of his steps ; although being accustomed, as we are, to his irregularities, it must be confessed that we did not give ourselves much trouble in the enquiry.

“ Accident acquainted us with what we might long have in vain attempted to discover, for a friend saw him in Paris, and I have no doubt that he is at present on the continent. It moreover appears that he is attended by a tall skeleton of a valet, a Frenchman, who is believed to have fled this country on account of forgery ; and if this be true, and such his company, I think that I have pretty good grounds for suspecting danger is threatening you, and you must not blame my timidity if I reiterate my anxiety and fears. Oh that this letter were fastened to an eagle’s wing if it may be the means of averting any calamity !”

“ Here, however, the red ink ends,” observed the Colonel ;—“ no, there are yet a few more lines. According to your desire I address this to Naples, yet feel I that there is the same uncertainty of its soon finding you, as one of those innumerable wooden billets which you describe as thrown into the Rhone has of reaching

its destination in the lake of Geneva. Ungrateful being that you are, to repay two such long letters by one so scant and *jejune*."

" But I perceive," observed Landon, " that I have read as much as I am permitted; and quite enough, I think, to prove that you have mistaken both the motives and the moral worth of your honest friend and secretary."

" I frankly confess, Colonel Landon," replied I, " that I have done his noble nature the foulest injustice. I did suppose that I had good grounds for suspecting his honesty, and that he was leagued with those accursed Lumleys to effect my ruin; but I now declare myself perfectly mistaken, and am anxious to make him every reparation in my power."

" Spoken like a worthy member of society," exclaimed Landon, " and you delight me. What steps are best to be taken with regard to these devilish conspirators we will afterwards determine; meanwhile, since I have succeeded so well in behalf of your best friend, it will give you some satisfaction to learn that I have not been altogether unsuccessful in my interference in another quarter. To tell you the plain truth,

on learning from Lady d'Eville that she had overheard all which had passed betwixt Mr. Foster and myself, I took the liberty of remonstrating roundly with her on her haughty and unseasonable behaviour; and whether it was the unusual warmth I displayed in pleading your cause, or the alarming picture I drew of your despair, certain it is, that she was mollified exceedingly. I firmly believe you are far from indifferent to her, but that she had suspected (God knows why) the sincerity of your professions; and that your only reason for marrying her was to evade that most silly and vexatious penalty of your late uncle's testament. But this unworthy surmise, I need scarcely say, is now completely laid at rest."

" You are an angel of hope and comfort," exclaimed I, grasping the Colonel's hand; " how have I merited such kindness—your lovely and amiable daughter then does not, you think utterly spurn and despise me?"

" Promise me not to despair, that's all—*Corpo di Bacco!*—I see no reason why she should be more inexorable than the rest of her sex; and they seldom are so in matters of

love or even gallantry. Pooh, pooh ! prove them as I always have done by contraries and contradictions ; Lady d'Eville has no rational reason for being positive in denying you ;— she makes no sacrifice in regard to society nor independency, otherwise I should never have advocated so strenuously your cause."

" Colonel Landon I am an altered man ; you have restored me to life and happiness !— I will this instant visit Lady d'Eville, and convince her of my disinterested passion, if every solemn asseveration which tongue can utter, may convince her."

" First make some reparation to your friend," observed Landon, " to whom you are unquestionably indebted for all this rapture."

" It is but justice to do so immediately," replied I, " and it will be the sweetest act of penitence I ever can perform."

" I believe you," said Landon, pocketing his papers in great glee at the success of his mission ; " and now Mr. Butler, since I have taken so much trouble in acquainting you of the true position of your own affairs, pray tell me something about your friend's fair corres-

pondent who writes a most copper plate Italian hand. I never concern myself about other persons affairs, but Mulgrave, the name Mulgrave is familiar to me, and I doubt not the family is respectable?"

This excusable though disavowed curiosity of the Colonel, I endeavoured to satisfy to the best of my power; but as my scanty information only amounted to what the reader already knows, I was not sorry to escape an infliction of further questions by the entrance of honest Dick Foster, who had in the mean time been sent for by my *valet de chambre*.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ What of him ?”

“ He’s quoted for a most perfidious slave
With all the spots o’th’ world, taxed and deboshed,
Which nature sickens with.”

All’s well.

I KNOW not which party felt most delight at the perfect reunion which now took place, although mine was chastened by the bitter self-accusations which I felt and expressed, for having wronged one of whose friendship my jealous disposition rendered me scarce worthy.

“ Say no more about the matter,” cried Foster the tear glittering in his eye, “ I am

more than recompensed by the ecstasy I now feel. Had God made me revengeful, I would have sufficient reason to be satisfied in seeing the sorrow which you feel for what has passed; verifying my parting words—that you would repent the injustice you had done me."

But to turn to other matters—my reconciliation with Lady d'Eville next followed, and was equally complete. Then she would make me no promise of her hand, but she nevertheless treated me in such a manner as shewed that the cause of her aversion (if such ever existed) was removed; and that her former coyness was assumed, for the purpose of giving my constancy a probation.

I may therefore affirm, that happiness did again dawn partially upon me. The brighter perhaps, as I had believed its beams were destined never again to gild my head; and the remainder of our stay in Naples and Castellamare was one of the pleasantest portions of an overclouded life.

It was at this time that Jasper Harrison fell ill, and Foster whose zeal for my interest

was strenuous and sincere, resolved on setting out for England in order to superintend my affairs. I was sorry to part with him, but to my surprise Lady d'Eville would not hear of our separation ; and positively required as an instance of my passive obedience and value of her good opinion that I should accompany him.

This appeared to me whimsical and even unreasonable, but to question her wishes was useless ; and being cheered by the certainty of her return to England a month after us I reluctantly obeyed. Joining a large party for the sake of mutual protection from the abundant banditti, we returned home, by Rome, Florence, Bologna, Venice, the Tyrol, Augsburg, Frankfort and the Rhine. From the latter town we despatched a letter to—the proprietor of my Hotel, requesting him to get our apartments ready in town ; and then gave up all our thoughts to the enjoyment of that picturesque scenery which has given birth to so much exquisite poetry and romance.

In those comparatively speaking primitive days, steam was a production known only to

travellers as a humming accompaniment to their breakfast kettle, and the sail to Rotterdam from Frankfort-on-the-Main was a matter of more time and danger than it now is. It nevertheless had the very material advantage, of permitting one to see more of the matchless and romantic banks of the river: instead of being, as is now the case, whisked past them as if by magic before the eye has half satiated itself with pleasure.

But our mode of travelling had another superiority; which was, that we stopped wherever we pleased, and instead of only making a pilgrimage to the Three Kings of stinking Cologne, which all the waters of Farina will never render supportable, we visited at least fifty places of interest, and ruined grandeur. At length we got back to Old England the comfortable,—and as I again entered my snug rooms which——had with praiseworthy attention retained for our accommodation, the substantial cheer and secluded habits of my country rose many points higher in my esteem. It happened to be a Sunday when we made our entry, and the dull but diver-

sified window boards presented the appearance of a large tailor's pattern book. I nevertheless felt extreme complacency and satisfaction, as seating myself at the window which commanded a view of a busy thoroughfare, I contemplated the conclusion, for some time, at least, of all extraordinary locomotion.

I had been here about a week, and with the exception of formal visitors quite solitary and unmolested, (Foster having thought it necessary to go to the North,) when my servant informed me that there had been a mean looking person making anxious enquiries after me; and seemed disappointed on hearing I was from home.

Supposing that this might be some poor fellow, who had some complaint to make, or favour of importance to request, I ordered James to tell me if he called again; and in the mean time ordered dinner an hour later, on account of having just heard from Foster that he would be with me that evening. He returned, as I expected; and we had just seated ourselves at table when James informed me that the same person who had called before

was below, and more importunate than ever for an interview. Now like many persons, I can stand annoyance or interruption, far better at any other time than that important one of feeding. It is then that the animal seems to obtain entirely the ascendant over us, so with a growl and a curse, I ordered him to be shewn into my other parlour. My choler being partially assuaged by a plateful of good soup, I repaired to my visiter, who was a spare starved looking man whose poverty of condition however plainly proceeded from habitual intoxication. Intemperance was written in legible characters upon his red and blotched face, and his eyes were even then partially glazed by drunkenness.

“ Well what the devil is your business with me ?” was my brief and complimentary salutation, which appeared to render him a shade more sober.

“ My name your honor,” replied he attempting some sort of civil scrape with his hoofs, “ is Thomas Prettyman, rag and bottle merchant Sir at your service—and my business,

no werry pleasant one, is with Francis Butler Esqr. if so it be, that your honor be that gentleman?"

"I am, and what business can you possibly have with me?"

"Only this Sir, that your honor is then the person I am sent for by a lodger of mine, who is dying or dead, and is anxious to see you Sir before it is all up with him."

"A lodger of yours!" replied I, scanning his shabby exterior—"who can he be?"

"Why all I knows about him your honor, is, that like other honest men, he has outrun the constable in his day, and heard ware hawk so often as to shut himself up in a close ken. I believe I am his last creditor Sir, he being in arrears for two weeks rent besides three hogs I lent him on his great coat to buy physic."

"Mr. rag and bottle merchant," cried I interrupting him, "I understand none of your slang. What is your lodger's name? and keep me here no longer than necessary for I am particularly engaged."

This rebuke surprised not a little Mr. Prettyman, who after gazing vacantly in my face for about a minute, answered—

“ Why, Sir, gentlemen in his sitivation may call themselves what they please, without the risk of any other enquirers than their creditors troubling themselves about their titles or alias’s as the old Bailey Latits term them. The gentleman calls himself to me Atkins; yes Thomas Atkins, but whether that is his true name I can’t say.”

“ I know no gentleman of that name Mr. Prettyman,” replied I opening the door in a significant enough manner, “ so good evening.”

“ Well your honor, I have executed my commission; and if Mr. Atkins, or whatever his real name may be dies without speaking to you it is not my fault. That he is a gentleman, I am certain by his lingo, though he does seem to have died of something like starvation; but a want of victuals Sir, will kill a lord as well as a trumper. Good afternoon your honor,” and accompanying this by another rasp of his hob nails on my Brussels carpet, he was leaving the room when I stopped him.

"Stay Mr. Prettyman," said I, "second thoughts are always best; this gentleman as you call him, may be some acquaintance of mine in distress and bearing a fictitious name. I will visit him. Where do you reside?"

"——— Street, No.—within the Rules; you will have no difficulty in discovering it, as I am the only rag and bottle merchant in that neighbourhood."

Here Mr. Prettyman took his leave, and I returned to finish my dinner and consult with Foster. To him I related verbatim all that had passed betwixt the rag-vender and myself, and after a serious consultation which was carried on, during a rapid discussion of a different kind, it was resolved that we should discover who this miserable being might be, who had thus mysteriously summoned me to attend him. Although such was the determination to which we had arrived, Foster was as fixed as a hungry juror in his opinion, that Mr. Prettyman was acting precisely the same part which Sears had previously done. I however thought it more likely that it might be Lumley himself who was in such extremity.

Differing on this point, we nevertheless agreed in the propriety of each taking a small pair of pistols in our pockets; as also ordering James to keep us in view though at a respectable distance, and to mark the house we might enter so as to give us assistance if required. These preparations being hastily made and our dinner finished, we sallied forth, took a hackney coach from the next stand, and were set down near the small dirty street we were in quest of. No difficulty occurred in finding Mr. Prettyman's establishment which was rather a rag dépôt than a shop, and indeed such a den of filth and abomination I never before entered. The window which was demi-opaque from an incrustation of dust, was filled with bottles of all kinds and shapes, and phials; whilst an old ricketty punch-bowl filled with various kinds of tacks and nails —a military fife cracked and string bound, a pair of Irish bagpipes, and many miscellaneous matters, gave it all the appearance of a petty pawnbroker's. But on crossing the threshold Mr. Prettyman's profession was more apparent, for the shop itself was literally

crammed with heaps of rags, piles of bottles and broken chrystral ; mixed with small quantities of old ropes, oakum, and even bones. So dreadful was the musty and combined stench of this horrible hole, that my heart rose, and I precipitately recoiled from its influence. Nor do I believe that I should have mustered courage again to face it, had not Mr. Prettyman come out and claimed acquaintance with me before all the passers by. This he did in a much more familiar way than was agreeable, offering to conduct me to Mr. Atkins, who he said was receiving ghostly consolation from the hands of a clergyman and some friends.

Any thing was preferable to be seen in such a vagabond's company ; so bidding him lead the way, I closed my nostrils with my thumb and finger, after inhaling a long breath of pure air which might last me for some time, and then warily followed him through or rather over the above mentioned merchandize. Our guide now led us up a very narrow and steep staircase which was as dark as pitch, and I confess that I by no means admired this situation, where a mortal stab might easily have been

delivered without the hand which dealt it ever being discovered.

I was accordingly induced to take the precaution of cocking one of my pistols, and keeping it levelled at the unconscious Mr. Prettyman, being resolved to make him fall an immediate victim should there be any treachery awaiting us. A few more steps brought us to a small landing, in which darkness was rendered visible by a few glimmering rays which squeezed themselves through the cracks and key-hole of a door. Whether it was that the rag merchant's eyes were accustomed to this gloom, or the rays fell on the polished barrel of my weapon, he suddenly asked what it was I carried in my hand.

"A pistol," replied I coolly, "to blow out your brains if you have decoyed us here with any villainous intention."

"And here are another couple to make the work sure," added Foster. "Ah! scoundrel bottle broker, if you have been so rash as to deceive us, your sinful soul is not worth the purchase of a Yarmouth herring."

“What pops!” exclaimed the terrified rag-vender, “Holy Father, what do you take me for? I’m no rank-rider, or ruffler, nor swindler, or affidavit-man either, as Heaven is my judge; but as honest a one in my line as any in the world — deceive you! what do your honors take me for—God preserve me! put up your snappers!”

The garnishing of flash words which decorated this speech, gave us no better opinion of Mr. Prettyman; but as we had little to dread from any attack, we ordered him sternly to proceed, and this he did with less alacrity, grumbling and cursing at the shy cock of a lodger who had placed him in such a suspicious situation.

The next flight of steps was every bit as steep and dark as the first; and on finishing them, I found that we had gained the garret of the tenement, from which proceeded a low voice as if engaged in prayer, interrupted frequently by sobs and lamentation. Mr. Prettyman now opened the door, and we found ourselves intruding upon a dismal scene, whilst neither the noise of our entry nor our

appearance caused any remark and very little attention. This attic was if possible more filthy than the rag dépôt below, and displayed that quintessence of poverty and misery which in English towns is generally to be found the nearer we climb to Heaven. It would have been impossible for the most experienced plasterer's eye to have determined whether the walls had ever been whitewashed; for they were completely blackened by smoke, soot or the stains of rain which had penetrated at different times through the slates, and trickled down them in every direction. There was but one small window, and that contained but one unshattered pane; the remainder being altogether wanting or in remnants, having the gaps filled with rags and pieces of an old hat.

The furniture of this last retreat of wretchedness, was fitting to its nature. It was comprised in a dirty deal box, a triangular fragment of looking glass stuck up against the wall, (which seemed the vanishing spirit of vanity) and a one armed chair afflicted with the spine complaint. The stuffing of this had long risen up in judg-

ment against the haircloth that had imprisoned it, and was as fuzzy as the head of an enraged African. But besides this there was on the floor a filthy flock-bed, on which covered by an old horse-cloth and a tattered ironing blanket, with a wisp of straw for a pillow, lay an emaciated object evidently in the last throes of death.

By his side knelt an elderly clergyman praying fervently, and an equally elderly lady whose grief was very violent; whilst seated on the afore-mentioned box and weeping, sat a fashionably dressed young lady. My attention was naturally enough fixed on Mr. Atkins, in whose shrunk and waxen features I to my surprise, instantly recognized my former opponent George Mulgrave, whilst Foster had in the meantime discovered that the young lady was his sister. Not a word escaped one of us, although an almost general recognition had taken place. Miss Mulgrave on perceiving Foster, instantly dropped her veil, and her mother after turning for a moment towards us, her streaming eyes refixed them on the ghostly

wreck of one, who despite of all his crimes and follies, was nevertheless her son, her perishing first-born !

We scarcely arrived in time to see the wretched Mulgrave die. And although he had twice sent for me in order to make confession of the destruction he had intended me—we came too late even to hear a syllable from his lips. When the clergyman, who had never desisted from prayer during our entrance, found that he was imploring mercy for one whose doom was already fixed, he stopped short ; and this was the first assurance we received of Mulgrave's spirit having passed away. The moment this was ascertained his mother gave way to ungovernable grief, and we were obliged to remove her as soon as possible.

Fortunately the rag-merchant had remained at the top of the stairs a slightly interested spectator of the melancholy scene ; and Foster, by promise of a reward, induced him to forget those suspicions which had rendered him so indignant, and to procure for us a hackney-coach. Into this we got the ladies, and accom-

panied them home. Foster now proffered his services to Mrs. Mulgrave, with respect to the funeral, which were thankfully received on her part ; and it was determined that the corpse should be brought home as privately and expeditiously as possible. Whilst he was engaged with the old lady in making the necessary arrangements on so sad an occasion, I obtained an interview with her beautiful daughter, from whom I learnt the following particulars.

It appeared that the last intelligence they had received of Mulgrave was when he was seen in Paris, as already mentioned ; and it was not long before my return that Prettyman called upon them and requested, in his name, the loan of a guinea. George's applications for money had been so frequent and pressing that Mrs. Mulgrave had long given up attending to them ; but on this occasion, the request was promptly complied with from a belief, that, as the sum was so small he might be in great necessity. The rag-merchant, however, had been bound over to strict secrecy as regarded his situation, to which he was reduced by overwhelming debt, and would give no in-

formation as to where he might be found. Nor was it until nearly another fortnight that Prettyman again called to beg that they would accompany him to where Mulgrave lay, half-starved, and dangerously ill.

They did so, and arrived about an hour before us, during which time he sunk so rapidly as to be desirous of the attendance of a Presbyterian Clergyman, to which persuasion he had formerly belonged. On his arrival he made a devout confession of his sins, and more especially of his diabolical participation in Lumley's plans to effect my destruction ; first by calling me out on a frivolous pretence ; and secondly, by conducting a scheme of assassination which had fortunately failed. He ended by expressing extreme regret that he had no opportunity of requesting my forgiveness. Unequivocal as this confession appeared to be, it was not perhaps extorted altogether by feelings of penitence ; for it afterwards was proved that Lumley had basely deserted his companion in crime when fallen into this extremity, and refused him any pecuniary assistance.

That atrocious villain was, no doubt, desi-

rous of getting rid, in any way, of one who, without having forwarded his interests, was in possession of a secret which placed him at his mercy ; whilst Mulgrave's spirit must, on the other hand, have smarted with some revengeful feelings at the black ingratitude of the wretch who could leave him to perish of actual starvation.

Yet did not Mulgrave's revenge carry him so far as might be expected ; for, before unburdening his conscience he sent an avowal of his intention to Lumley in order that he might save himself by flight. But that Providence which, before our mortal careers are ended, usually portions out to each according to his deserts, decreed that Lumley's iniquities should have a sudden end : for next morning a report was heard in his bed-room, and the captain was discovered weltering in his blood.

END OF MR. BUTLER'S MANUSCRIPT.

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

BY THE EDITOR.

“ *Vocat ultimus labor omnes.*”

Virgil.

GENTLE readers—if these papers have afforded you any amusement, no one regrets more deeply than myself their abrupt conclusion. For, although I am able, by the assistance of many letters and memoranda (kindly lent me by Mr. Butler's heirs) to recount, in my own words, the future fortunes of our *Catanthrope* I possess none sufficiently lengthy or lucid to extract for your perusal.

In the first place, that which has already been clearly conceived, must now be candidly confessed. To wit, that Butler was ere long married to the beautiful Lady d'Eville, who, moreover, proved an affectionate spouse : and, although never blessed by any family, they long lived happily together.

As for the honest-hearted Dick Foster, he, with credit to himself and advantage to his friend, continued to fulfil the duties of steward, chamberlain, secretary and companion. Nor, it will be foreseen, did he find any difficulty in obtaining the hand of his fascinating sweetheart, who, I have every reason to believe, proved quite as amiable and much more prolific a partner than his friend's.

Miss Lumley never recovered the shock occasioned by her brother's awful death, and the odium cast upon her by Mulgrave's confession ; but, abandoning herself to the deceitful solace of strong waters, soon came to a most miserable and unpitied end.

About the time of her death, I find some notes of a singular discovery which originated in Butler's almost morbid sensibility with re-

spect to honour. All who have read these pages will remember his obtaining, on credit, a walking-stick from a poor vender in the vicinity of Lambeth Palace. This, it appears, he never had an opportunity of paying for, till, one day happening to be in that quarter with Colonel Landon, he actually went some distance out of his way to discover, if possible, the person who had shewn such faith in his integrity. Although upwards of two years had elapsed, he found this peripatetic merchant precisely in the same place—in the same thread bare habiliments, with the same fleshless look of famine, and a similar bundle of canes under his arm; which, in his usual unobtrusive manner, he offered for inspection. It is not surprising that the cares of existence should have rendered this poor wretch's memory little better than a sieve as respected the faces of purchasers; but, on hearing the circumstances attending the credit, he well remembered them, as also one who had expressed an interest in his history. Butler was in too great a hurry to put many questions respecting his prospects or situation, which, indeed, were perceptible

enough in his appearance ; but dropped a guinea into his hand. He had hardly done so when Colonel Landon, who never forgot faces, grew as red as an enraged turkey-cock, and, turning to his son-in-law, demanded, with a dreadful oath, if he meant to insult him.

This strange speech astonished Butler no little, till it was explained to him that this miserable stick-vender and quondam coachman was the very individual who had carried off one of the Colonel's sisters. In course of time, the Colonel, who had become not only less capable of sustaining the arduous duties of good society, but less fond of its vanities, relented so far towards his brother-in-law, as to instigate enquiries into his character. This he found unexceptionable, in spite of his extreme poverty, and he was induced to allow him an annuity, which was improved by Butler's giving him the easy lease of a small farm. Landon soon afterwards relinquished even the best society, and spent many years with the Butlers in Northumberland, where his name is still kindly mentioned by Foster's children, of whom he was excessively fond. Of the rest of the characters

mentioned in Mr. Butler's confessions, I have obtained distinct but scanty intelligence.

Miss Witherspoon died, aged sixty-three years, and bequeathed several favourites (not feline) to Mrs. Foster, who shared them equitably with Mrs. Butler.

'Squire Mansfield lived to a good old age in much the same ruined gentility as Sir Walter Scott in his introduction to "*Quentin Durward*," describes the Marquis de Hautlieu to have done : and when his remains were placed near those of the hapless Eliza, Butler, who was there, shed many a tear. His giddy daughter spent most of her time and all her bloom in the Opera-house and Assembly-room, and died prematurely, abroad.

It is clearly proved that a person bearing the strange name of Maher or Mere Groby, a member of the Society of Friends, lived for a considerable time in a handsome and retired villa near Hackney ; which shows that the honest Quaker, mentioned in these pages (if it be he) managed to garner up a comfortable independency for his declining years.

Of Timotheus Muckshadee, Esq., or his spouse, I never have been able to find the slightest trace; but a transatlantic friend lately assured me he remembers hearing of a learned professor of that name, in some one or other, of the American colleges. I have reason, therefore, to believe that he, like many other men of considerable acquirements in lowly life, had been compelled by untoward circumstances to emigrate, for ever, from his native land.

There remains one other person to speak of; the honest old Jasper Harrison. He recovered from his attack, and lived to an almost patriarchal age. Before being gathered to his fathers, he had the satisfaction of descending, twice after Foster's marriage, into that cellar, the practical joke of which had so nearly cost Butler his fortune; and, drawing with his own hands one of those sacred cobwebbed flasks which were so rarely applied to any but christening purposes.

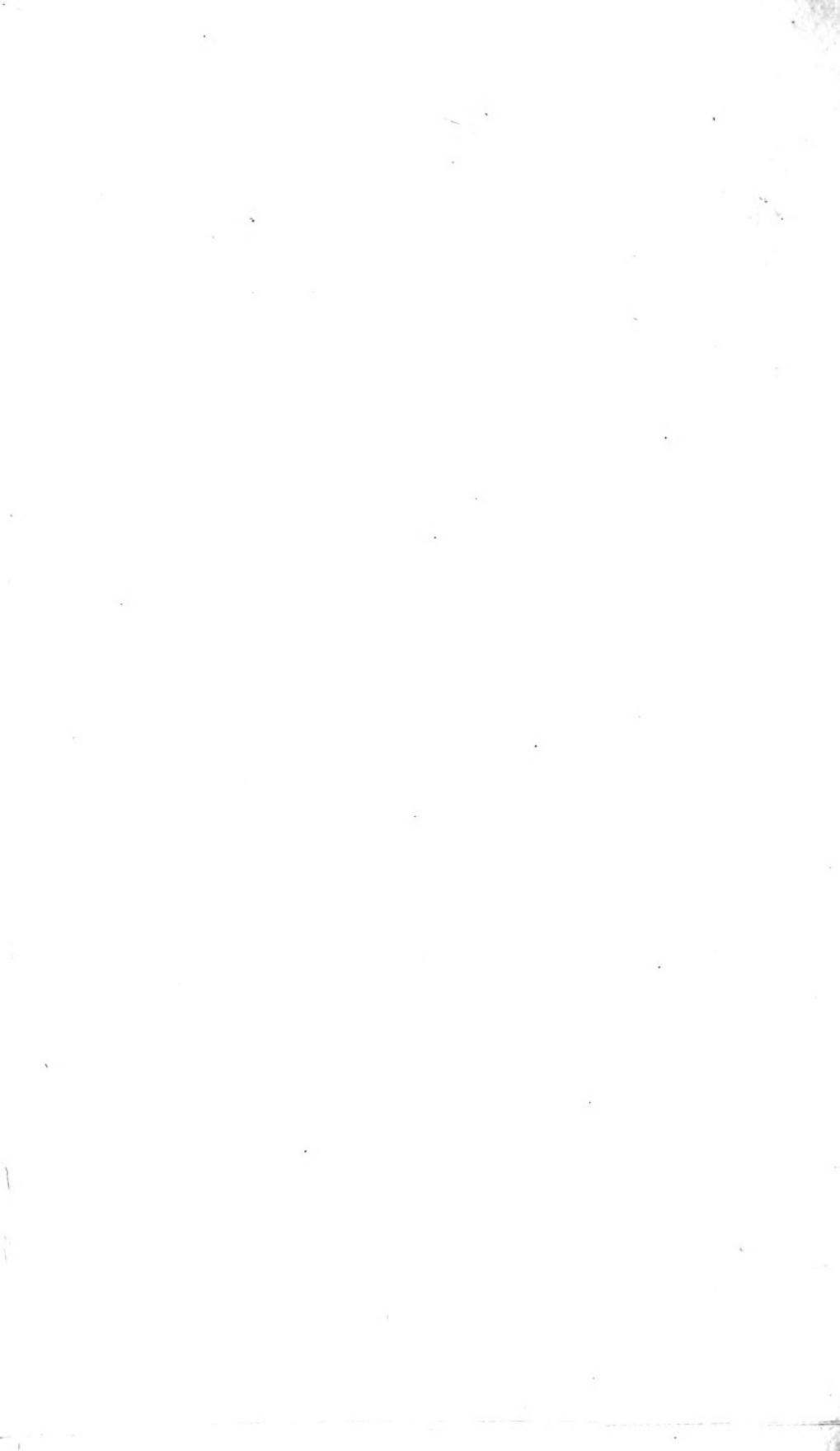
True, these had hitherto been devoted to the house of Butler; but Foster's faithful

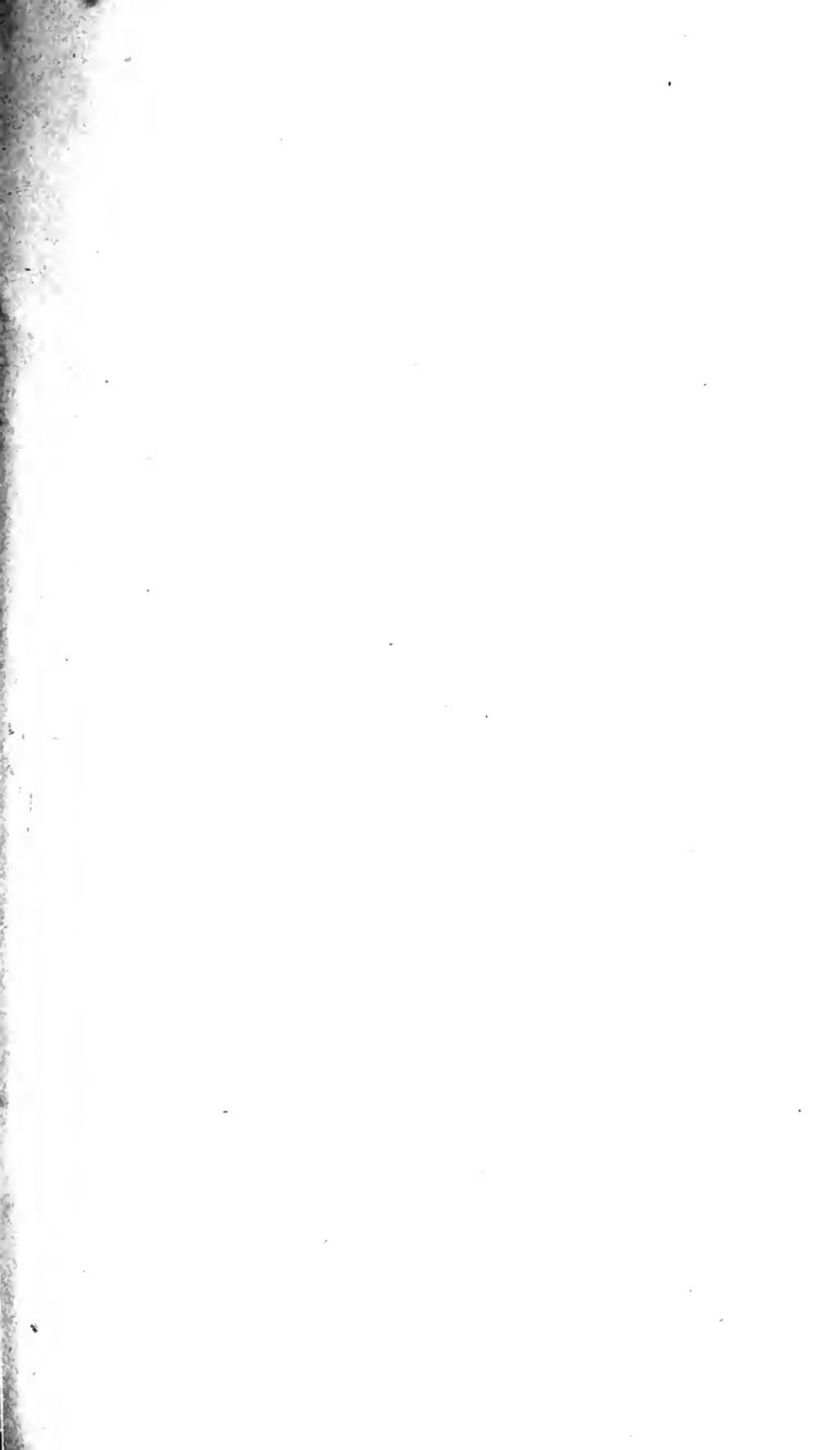
friendship had almost as much naturalised him in the eyes of the old Seneschal, as he was adopted as a brother by him, for whom he had been so instrumental in retaining the inheritance.

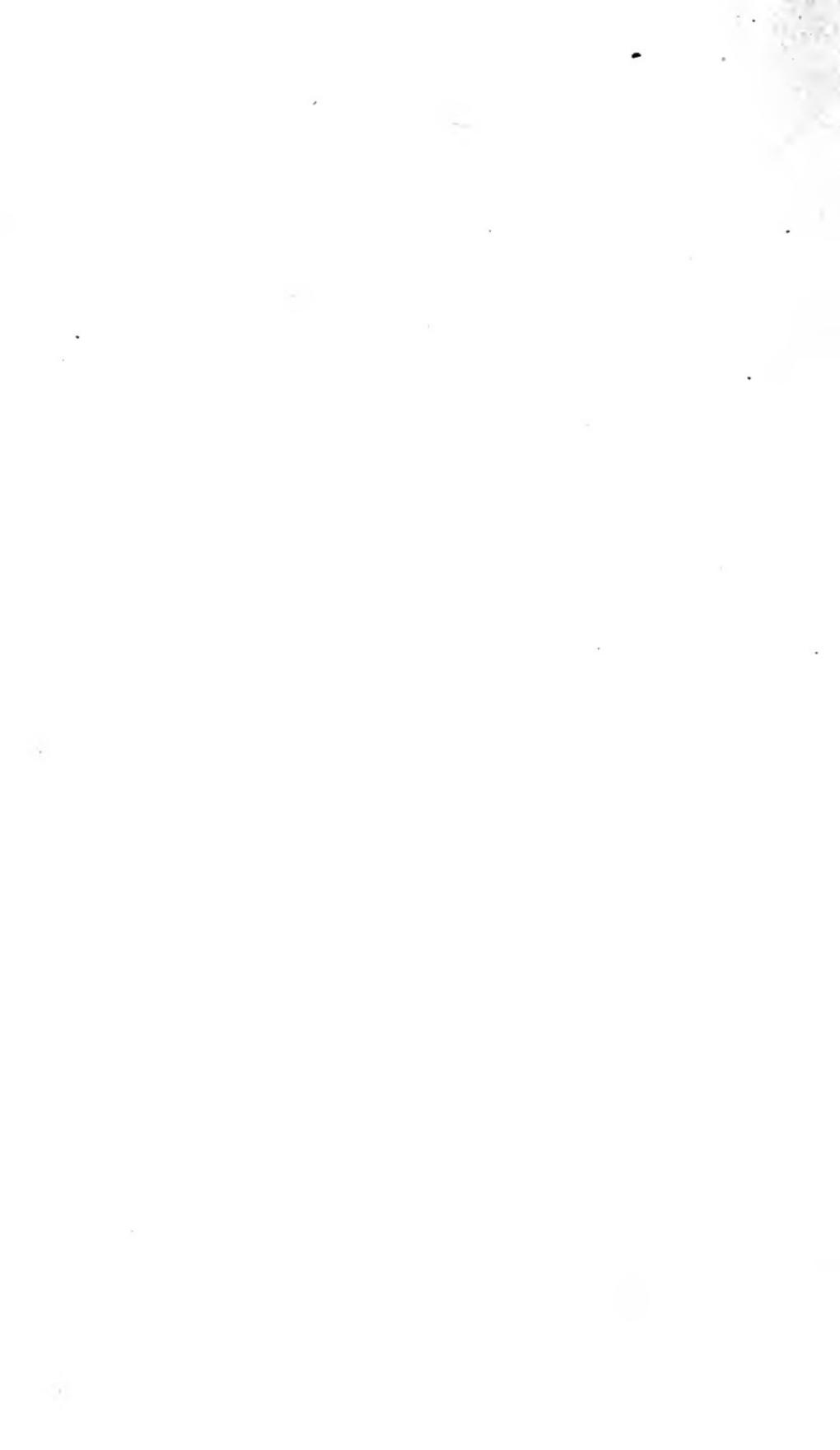
THE END.

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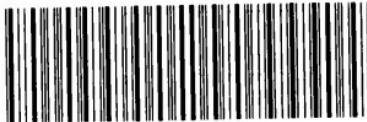








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